

GERALD FITZGERALD;

An Irish Tale.

BY ANN OF SWANSEA,

AUTHOR OF

UNCLE PEREGRINE'S HEIRESS; CONVICTION; GONZALO DE BALDIVIA;
DEEDS OF THE OLDEN TIME; SECRETS IN EVERY MANSION;
WOMAN'S A RIDDLE; GUILTY OR NOT GUILTY, &c. &c.

"The man who harbours enmity in his bosom, cherishes a serpent to sting himself."

IN F VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR A. K. NEWMAN AND CO.

1831.

GERALD FITZGERALD.

CHAP. I.

The world, the joyous world—too long I've stay'd
Inactive, hidden in sequester'd shade ;
Forth let me go ; the world seems bright and fair ;
Fortune and fame hang up rich garlands there ;
For firm of heart, and strong of arm they glow ;
I'll win, and twine them proudly round my bro
So said young Rona'd, as he left his home,
Through life's bewild'ring labyrinth to roam,
To prove that worth is doom'd to undergo
Uncertainty in all things saving woe—
To find that fools and villains still abound,
While truth and virtue rarely can be found.

THE earl of Vandeleur, after seeing the remains of his father deposited with all due ceremony, pomp, and ostentation, beside his right noble ancestors in the family vault, did not hurry his return to Done-raile Castle, where the woman he was constrained to admit to a participation of his rank, was exulting in the success of her own ambitious schemes, and laughing at.

the defeat of his. The passion Charlotte O'Brien had inspired, she was at no pains to render permanent, by hiding the defects of her temper, or disguising the motives that had induced her to consent to a clandestine marriage. Possession had converted the goddess into a mere mortal; and the husband, as he became indifferent to her person, discovered the cunning and selfishness of her character, and found, to the mortification of his vanity, that his title, and the estates to which he was heir, not his person, of which he was so proud, had obtained him her preference: in a very short time, his lordship would gladly have resigned her to either of his rivals—he would have denied their marriage, had it been possible; but her ladyship, aware of his fickle disposition, had taken care to provide against such a measure, by securing proper witnesses, and tying him down in a bond, the payment of which would greatly embarrass, if not ruin his fortune. Politeness to a wife he was compelled to acknowledge, the earl of Vandeleur thought quite sufficient; affection on either side was out of the question; he knew she was incap-

able of love for any human being except herself, and he felt he loved only Ada; and with this conviction he believed his absence equally agreeable to his countess as himself. Arrangements for paying off his debts occupied a portion of his time; but the greater part was devoted to pleasure; for neither his love for Ada, the recent death of his father, nor the estrangement of his mother, depressed the spirits of the young earl of Vandeleur so far, as to make him shun amusement, or relinquish pursuits congenial to his taste and temper.

At his banker's, the earl one morning encountered two young men he had known at Paris, with whose society he had been so pleased, that when recalled home, he regretted that a previous engagement prevented their accepting his warm invitation to Ireland. Greetings and salutations having been mutually given, the earl was informed they had come purposely to explore the beauties of the Emerald Isle, and with an intention to renew their acquaintance with him.

One of these gentlemen was the younger

son of a noble family; his name was Cyril Percy; he was an avowed atheist, and had formed his principles on the Epicurean system, that true wisdom consisted in enjoyment, and that the end of life being oblivion, none but fools would waste it in self-denial and mortification. The person of Mr. Percy was tall and well formed; his face was not exactly handsome, but he had fine teeth, and expressive dark-grey eyes, that with animated and persuasive eloquence, aided the dangerous sophistry of his speech: he also possessed wit and gentlemanly accomplishments, that rendered him a most entertaining and agreeable companion to his own sex, and a fascinating and seductive acquaintance for female.

The other stranger was an officer, who, thinking regimentals the costume of all others most likely to attract the notice of the ladies, had entered the army in opposition to the opinion of an uncle, who had brought him up, and who thought, with an estate of six thousand pounds a-year in possession, and double that sum in expectation, he ought to have remained quietly

at home, and left the army to those who had their fortunes to seek; but Oscar Langrish was obstinately bent upon wearing epaulets, and figuring in a scarlet coat; and when, having bought a commission, he was saluted as captain, he seemed at the summit of human felicity: yet Oscar Langrish was not a fool; but when a mere boy, he had seen at a ball such marked preference shewn by the females to gentlemen of the army, that he determined on being a soldier. Without being particularly brilliant in conversation, or strikingly handsome in person, with a set of white teeth, a ready laugh, and constant good temper, he was considered an agreeable, friendly, generous fellow by his own sex, and contrived to be a favourite with the ladies, who repaid his pleasantries with praising his fine teeth, and declaring he was a charming singer of ballads, and took a part in trios and duets better than any gentleman of their acquaintance.

The mind of captain Langrish had not been injured by his acquaintance with Mr. Percy, for he was too gay and volatile to attend to abstruse reasoning, or

philosophical argument; but on his unthinking generosity and good nature he had made an impression that was not likely to be eradicated; on various pretences—the miscarriage of letters, delay of remittances, and insolent importunity of creditors—Mr. Percy had borrowed near a thousand pounds of captain Langrish, who, confiding in his honour, had never asked or received a written acknowledgment of the debt. Such were the companions with whom the earl of Vandeleur professed himself most happy to renew his acquaintance, and whom he invited to spend the autumn with him at Doneraile Castle.

The earl of Vandeleur knew that his mother had taken a house near the Phoenix Park, and that she had brought Miss Lambert with her to Dublin; but as etiquette did not permit the dowager to appear in public, or to make calls in the present early stage of her widowhood, he had no chance of meeting Ada, who being a stranger in Dublin, was not likely to pay visits, or go out alone. Hopeless as he was of procuring an interview, being at variance with his mother, he every day, morning

and evening, rode past her house, without catching a glimpse of his cousin, whom he fancied he adored—to whom the mystery of his conduct was now explained—by whom he wished to be pardoned, and, weak and unreasonable as was the desire, to be pitied and loved. At last he learned that he was taking infinite trouble to no purpose, for the house wanting some repairs, the dowager countess of Vandeleur and Miss Lambart had accepted an invitation from lady Castleton, and had gone to stay some weeks at her romantic seat, near Killarney, where they expected to meet the baroness Wandesford, and some other friends.

Dublin was at that time very dull; most persons of consequence had left it for the country; and the earl of Vandeleur began to think it was necessary to return to Doneraile Castle; and to this he was induced, by learning that the expected visitors had arrived, for he had a curiosity to see the sister-heiresses, whom his lady had spoken of as tolerably well-looking, but intolerably awkward and uninformed.

The earl remembered her description of

Miss Lambart, and gave little credit to her report, which he knew was never favourable to the beauty or accomplishments of any of her own sex. Having nothing to interest him at Dublin, the earl of Vandeleur determined to judge for himself, and mounting the box of his travelling-carriage, he drove his friends, Percy and Langrish, without accident, to Doneraile Castle, saying he would announce himself. He conducted his companions to the boudoir, where the taste of his mother had collected and arranged the costly and elegant decorations; where buhl, bronze, ormolu, and lapis-lazuli ornaments, Etruscan and Persian vases, marble statues, and the richest exotic flowers, were mingled together without confusion, but with a studied negligence, that produced a most pleasing and delightful effect.

In the midst of this profusion of wealth and luxury, the countess of Vandeleur reclined on an ottoman, in all the voluptuousness of an eastern princess, and looking, as Cyril Percy said, like one of Mahomet's houri. Miss Desmond, a fine shewy bru-

nette, sat near her, flirting with sir Harry Ogle. Miss Emily Desmond, a fair delicate-looking girl, was seated at a small work-table, quietly stringing steel and gold beads, and listening with deep attention to a pale, but interesting young man, who was reading lord Byron's "Giaour." The honourable Mrs. Chatterton also appeared to listen, but in reality, her attention was given to the inconstant sir Harry Ogle: who, regardless of the indignant glances cast upon him from her green eyes, persisted in laughing and talking with Miss Desmond, and playing with the silky ears of her little pet spaniel.

The earl, having introduced his own friends, and been introduced to those of his lady, shook the young man who had been reading very cordially by the hand.— "This is an unexpected pleasure, Darel," said he; "believe me, I am truly happy to see you at Doneraile Castle."

Mr. Darel bowed, and expressed himself greatly honoured.

"I have much to say, and many inquiries to make after the kind friends of

my boyhood," said the earl; "but not now, for I am impatient to see my boy."

"I fancy he is asleep," returned the countess, "and it will be at the hazard of making him cross, if he is suddenly disturbed."

"Nonsense!" returned the earl; "I want to see if the urchin is grown. Will your ladyship oblige me by sending for him?"

"Certainly, if you desire it," said the countess; "but I really think you had better go to the nursery, and there you can see him without waking him."

But regardless of this advice, the earl insisted on the child being brought down to the boudoir.

The countess made no farther opposition; she wished to appear amiable in the eyes of the earl's friends; and, with a complacent smile, she ordered lord Conway to be brought from the nursery.

The young lord was grown, and much improved in person, and laughed, and suffered himself to be caressed and tossed about with perfect good humour, till the earl, beginning to grow weary, suffered

Emily Desmond to relieve him.—“I dote upon children,” said she, as she carried the boy to a table, where, among other splendid toys, stood a time-piece; the child immediately placed its dimpled hand upon it, and tried to drag it towards him. —

“Bravo, my little man!” exclaimed Percy; “you give an early indication of wisdom; to seize upon time, and enjoy it, is the utmost that philosophy can teach or attain.”

“I am no philosopher,” said Emily Desmond; “but I think——”

“Never think,” interrupted Percy: “deep meditation brings on premature wrinkles.”

“Wrinkles!” repeated captain Langrish; “who could think of wrinkles, while beholding youth and beauty?”

“You are right, Oscar,” returned Percy. “Beauty and infancy are objects that man’s fancy ought to immortalize; and I never saw a female hold a child more gracefully than Miss Emily Desmond.”

Emily blushed.

“My sister is a most excellent nurse,” observed Miss Desmond; “she constant-

ly visits all the cottages on sir Hector's estate, and never fails to caress and take the little chubby dirty urchins in her arms; I have seen her sitting with half-a-dozen clinging round her."

"And do you never go with your sister to the poor cottages?" asked sir Harry Ogle.

"Sometimes," replied Miss Desmond.

"And then you nurse the dirty brats?"

Miss Desmond shook her head.

"No! What do you do then?—do you teach the elder ones their letters?"

"Pray do not suspect me of any thing so amiable," returned Miss Desmond.

"No, no, sir Harry; I detest trouble, so, instead of nursing or instructing, I give the children a trifle from my purse to scramble for, and hasten from their noise as expeditiously as I can."

"It is exactly what I do myself," said sir Harry.

"It is certainly very proper to assist the poor," rejoined lady Vandeleur; "but I see no necessity for nursing their disagreeable children."

"But all children are not disagreeable,"

said Emily Desmond: "Poor little helpless creatures, if no one loved or cared for them, what would become of them?"

"Very true," replied the earl: "for my own part, I think children are in general interesting—some particularly so. No one can justly call this little fellow disagreeable," continued he, patting the infant's cheek.

"No," said the honourable Mrs. Chatterton; "lord Conway is a little angel."

"The perfect image of his lovely mother," whispered Cyril Percy, in a voice distinct only to the ear of the countess, who smiled her approbation of the compliment.

Captain Langrish declared himself very partial to children, and that it always gave him pleasure to see young ladies notice them; for he thought it gave a promise that they would become tender mothers.

The young lord Conway's sleeping-time had now actually arrived, and he began to be weary of being noticed and caressed, and to put up his coral lip and whimper.

"Send him away, for goodness sake;

for if he sets up his pipe," said the countess, "we shall be stunned with his noise.

"He has famous lungs then, it seems, returned the earl, giving the child to his nurse, whom he bade be careful of him as she valued his favour. "What a pity it is the boy is not a man," said the earl, addressing himself to captain Langrish, "for with such a powerful voice, he might rival you as a singer."

"Captain Langrish sings—that is delightful intelligence," said the countess, with animation; "we shall be able to have a concert. I am so pleased for I dote on music.

Captain Langrish bowed, and modestly confessed he was now and then induced to take part in a duet or trio; but begged her ladyship would be moderate in her expectations, for he really was but an indifferent singer.

"I shall not take your word upon this subject," replied the countess: "I will hear you myself, and judge your abilities."

"The very thing he wishes, though he affects modesty," observed Mr. Percy; "he wants to be flattered. for I assure

you, ladies, captain Langrish has a most mellifluous voice."

"Of which he shall give proof this very evening," resumed the countess. "This is delightful. We only wanted a gentleman singer or two to get up a charming musical *soiree*."

"I hope, countess," said Miss Desmond, "you do not intend to exclude my papa. Is not sir Hector a very fine singer?"

"Of 'Old Towler' and 'Tally-ho,' most certainly," replied the countess, laughing; "but, *entre nous*, Miss Desmond, I believe sir Hector is better pleased to talk with Mrs. Chatterton than to sing for me; and I wish every person to do the thing that is most agreeable to themselves."

It was not at all agreeable to Miss Desmond that her father should take a second wife; and as there had been reports of his drinking the honourable Mrs. Chatterton's health at the Fox Hunter's Club, she cast a suspicious glance on the little widow, who, endeavouring to look dignified, said—"If sir Hector Desmond prefers my conversation, he never told me so; but there are persons," fixing her green eyes

on sir Harry Ogle, that are deceitful enough to make professions of regard ; and after all their compliments and sentimental speeches, mean nothing."

" I trust, madam," said Mr. Percy, with mock gravity, " you do not speak from experience."

" You mean to say you hope Mrs. Chatterton's experience has prevented her from listening to such deceitful professions," said Miss Desmond.

" To be sure—certainly," rejoined sir Harry Ogle ; " that must be Mr. Percy's meaning."

" You are extremely impertinent," said Mrs. Chatterton. " My experience has taught me, that when a man is destitute of brains, he is invariably deficient in good manners."

" Sir Harry did not like this retort ; he had a high opinion of his own wit and understanding, and was not pleased to have them disputed.—" I am extremely concerned, madam," said he, " that I have had the misfortune to offend ; but, really, 'pon my honour——"

" Honour !" interrupted the widow,

reddening to a deep crimson ; “ honour ! poor man ! you are innocent of the meaning of the word ! but do not flatter your conceit with supposing it in your power to offend me ; no, believe me, you are too insignificant for me to be angry at any thing you can say.”

She then left the room, to the great relief of sir Harry Ogle, who feared, in her displeasure, she would discover “ *the whole course of his wooing.*”

“ Mercy upon me ! what have you done to put Mrs. Chatterton into such a flame, sir Harry ?” asked, Miss Desmond. “ I fear I shall find out that you are a gay Lothario. I seriously think you have been making love to Mrs. Chatterton, and acting the perfidious and inconstant ”

“ Ridiculous !” exclaimed the countess of Vandeleur ; “ but if it is so, her folly is justly punished ; if, at her age, she listens to professions of love, she deserves to be disappointed and deceived.”

The earl of Vandeleur, while this conversation was going on, had retired with Wilmot Darel to the recess of a bay window, at the extremity of the room ; and

had learned from him, that he had clandestinely left his home, in the province of Munster, because his inclinations and conscience did not approve the path marked out for him by his parents, who were desirous that he should become a priest, while his own hopes and wishes pointed to the army.

"I am here," said Darel, "to solicit your friendship and your interest, to promote my views."

So far the young man was ingenuous; but while frankly confessing the motive that brought him to Dorseraile Castle, he did not avow, that honour and reason urged him to fly, and banish for ever from his heart, a sentiment injurious to friendship, even at the sacrifice of all his worldly hopes.

"We have not met since we were boys, Wilmot," said the earl; "I am glad to renew our acquaintance, and for former friendship's sake, I will use all my interest to promote your wishes."

Darel would have expressed his gratitude, but the earl interrupted him.—"It really would be a shame," said he, "to de-

prive the army of a fine young fellow like you ; but, tell me, when did you arrive ?”

“ Nearly a fortnight since,” replied Darel ; “ and finding you were absent, I would have followed you to Dublin ; but the countess kindly invited me to wait your return, which she expected would be in a day or two ; and I confess,” continued he, colouring and hesitating, “ that the time has passed so rapidly and so pleasantly, that——”

“ You forgot the motive that brought you hither,” said the earl ; “ well, speed your wishes : the girls are both of them pretty, and have fortunes worth a younger brother’s looking after.”

Darel had no time to deny the earl’s supposition, for sir Hector Desmond unceremoniously interrupted their conversation, by seizing the earl’s hand, and boisterously shaking it ; while, with a stentor voice ; he congratulated him on his marriage.

“ This is a fine old place of yours, my lord, built soon after the death of Niell Naighvallach, I understand ; and the park very extensive, and well stocked with

deer. But why the devil," continued the baronet, "do not you keep a pack of hounds? and then you have not a thoroughbred horse in your stud—and you might have rare hunting."

The earl confessed he had but little partiality for field sports.

Sir Hector looked almost contemptuous, as he repeated—"Not partial to field sports! why they are the only sports a sensible man ought to engage in. Zounds! I hate to think of a tall strong-built fellow, mincing and pointing out his toes, and skipping about like a monkey, at balls and masquerades, and turning day into night, till he has no appetite for a slice of sirloin, and looks as pale and as thin as a rushlight; while, if he followed field sports, he would have a ruddy cheek, a keen appetite, and enjoy health and long life."

"Barring accidents; sir Hector," interrupted the earl.

"Ay, true, barring accidents," continued sir Hector; "a man may chance to break his neck in a fox-chase, to be sure; but, to my mind, that is preferable to dy-

ing by inches, of lingering diseases, brought on by indolence and indulgence. My day begins when you fashionable folks are putting on your nightcaps; and I am preparing for bed when you are sitting down to dinner. I beg your pardon, my lord, but I must be getting back to Limerick, for neither my mare, nor my dogs, nor myself, like the lazy, slothful lives that we spend here; we want to be up galloping and scampering over the hills before sunrise; the girls have my leave to stay, if they like, for their mother made fine ladies of them; and after her death, their aunt brought them up in fashionable ways, for which I never would have forgiven her, only she left them all her fortune. But you must excuse me, my lord; I would not be so rude as to go away from your house before I had seen and wished you joy; but now I feel myself at liberty to take my own course, and that will be towards my own place, Desmond Hall, to give an eye to my hounds and pointers, and the handsomest foal in all Ireland, coal black like its sire, Mazeppa, whose dam cost the duke of——”

The earl of Vandeleur, with no little effort, converted a yawn into a smile; expressed much concern that he was not a sportsman, and qualified to leap hedges, ditches, and gates, as the baronet's companion; but promised to introduce him to a man after his own heart, lord Mahon, who kept the finest hounds and hunters in that part of the country, and would, he was certain, be proud to make his acquaintance."

"Yes," returned sir Hector, "I have heard of lord Mahon's hounds, and his love of the chase."

"Which I trust," resumed the earl, "will be an inducement to you, sir Hector, to prolong your stay at Doneraile Castle, where I shall feel gratified to see you make yourself at home."

Sir Hector thanked his lordship by a hearty shake of the hand, which almost dislocated his joints, and expressed himself ready to be introduced to lord Mahon.—

"I have seen him at Dublin some years ago," said the baronet, "when he had no expectation of the title; but no matter for

that; tell a man what he is, not what he has been."

"Lord Mahon bears an excellent character among his tenants," said the earl, "and is much respected in the neighbourhood."

"To be sure, and why not," replied sir Hector; "though he was a poor man a few years ago, that is no good reason at all why he should not behave himself properly, now he is rich."

"And yet," observed Wilmot Darel, "we have instances of men whose conduct was irreproachable in poverty, who became villains and tyrants when raised to affluence."

"They were mushrooms, and sprung from dunghills," replied sir Hector; "they had not a spark of old gentility belonging to them; persons that inherited the wealth gained by barter, by extortion, by defrauding and scraping; but we all know that lord Mahon, though far removed, was any how related, both by father and mother's side, to the noble family whose title and property he inherits, through possessing a robust constitution, and by the lucky

chance of stepping over the graves of seven nearer claimants."

"A lucky chance indeed," rejoined Darel, "and I should think unprecedented."

"Then you think wrong," resumed sir Hector; "for there is sir Alexander Antrobus, the son of a blacksmith, and bred a carpenter, who made with his own hands coffins for five sons and two nephews of sir Patrick Antrobus, and wore crape round his hat for three first cousins of the old baronet's, before he became himself the last male of the family, and consequently heir to the estates as well as the title."

"It was a singular circumstance," said Darel.

"I could tell you of another person but I see the ladies are moving off, and have not time just now," said sir Hector; "but only refresh my memory with a hint, and I will tell you all about it—a strange affair, I promise you. But the ladies are gone to put on their flounces and trinkum trankums for dinner, and I suppose I must go and take off my boots, and sacrifice to the Graces, as the honourable Mrs. Chatterton calls it;—a very chatty, agree-

able, pleasant little woman that Mrs. Chatterton, eh! my lord—A near neighbour of mine, Mr. Darel; she has a noble mansion, and some acres of rich land, that join my estate, and it would be a famous speculation—Confound that bell; if I do not make haste, I shall not be ready for dinner, and I like to sit down to the first course.”

Wilmot Darel, the second son of an ancient but comparatively poor family, had been designed and educated by his parents for a priest; but though naturally serious and visionary, his character inclined far more to the chivalric than the devout; his days had been chiefly spent at his father's retired seat in Munster, under the instruction of the family confessor, who, though pious and learned, was not a man of superior intellect; nor at all calculated to guide the opinions or direct the studies of a youth of strong passions, who from childhood had been allowed free access to the old library, that contained, among a very few well-chosen volumes, an abundance of romances, and incredible histories

of the crusades, every page of which recounted the extravagant and superhuman exploits of a young hero, whose courage at splendid tournament, in the field of battle, or in the rescue of some princess, or high-born damsel, from the power of a gigantic ravisher, raised him from obscurity to companionship with nobles, and obtained for him wealth, and the smiles and favour of beauty.

These inflated and improbable tales, the young, the romantic, and sensitive Wilmot, was permitted to read and brood over, in the deep solemn recesses of woods, beside stupendous waterfalls, and on the wild mountains that surrounded his home, till sunk in visionary trances of enthusiasm, he identified himself with the warrior or the lover, whose valorous spirit and good sword obtained such glorious recompence.

The unthinking and selfish extravagance of his eldest brother had introduced pecuniary difficulties into the family, and considerably involved the estate, which was mortgaged to a large amount, to pay the debts and raise supplies for the heir; and this circumstance rendered the parents of

Wilmot Darel more pressing and urgent with him to prepare himself for entering upon the sacred ministry, for which he had been educated.

Wilmot was unwilling to remain a burthen upon his parents; he saw the necessity of providing for himself, but he felt he had not the self-denying mind, the humility and patience, the sanctity of spirit, that should belong to a person devoted to the care of souls; he could not bring himself to relinquish the hope of pursuing a more active and luminous course than the one his friends had marked out for him. Many conflicting days were passed by Wilmot, in meditating how to avoid the dull and monotonous life of a priest, and he almost resolved to enlist as a soldier; but while hesitating, between pride and the chance of rising by merit to the elevated rank he aspired to attain, he remembered the many professions of friendship made to him by Lord Conway, while they stayed together, a few days previous to his lordship quitting Ireland.

Some few years had elapsed since these

professions were made; but Wilmot, judging from his own unsophisticated feelings, believed no time could obliterate or deaden a friendship solemnly pledged, or render nugatory a promise faithfully given. He knew that lord Conway was an only child, idolized by his parents, and indulged in all his wishes; and feeling how he would act in such a situation, he gave lord Conway credit for similar good faith and generosity; and remembering how powerful was the interest of the earl of Vandeleur, he privately left his father's house, and arrived alone at Doneraile Castle, to claim protection, and solicit the earl's good offices to assist in reconciling his parents to his intention of entering the army, and in procuring a commission, for which occasion he was desirous that his father should empower him to receive a few hundred pounds, which had been bequeathed him by a deceased relation.

On Wilmot Darel's arrival at the castle, his appearance and manner so pleased the new-made countess, that she pressed him to remain till the return of her lord, whom she pretended to expect the following day;

but a fortnight elapsed, and the unhappy Wilmot had become so fascinated with the charms of the artful unfeeling countess, that he dreaded the arrival of the earl, whose presence, by concluding his business, would in consequence expedite his departure, and banish him from the charms of the Circe whose beauty had enchanted and rendered him forgetful that she was a wife and mother, and never could be any thing to him.

The earl of Vandeleur thought it extremely natural for a fine young man like Wilmot Darel, to dislike being a priest, and he readily entered into his views, and encouraged his predilection for the army. His pride was flattered by Darel seeking his patronage; and he immediately set about propitiating his parents, and winning their approbation of his becoming a soldier, a task of less difficulty than Darel had imagined; for finding how very averse he was to their wishes, they considered the impossibility of compelling a man to be a saint, and wisely consented to let him follow the course best suited to his inclinations.

An accident having deprived a friend of captain Langrish of the use of his right arm, he was desirous of quitting the army, and through the interest of the earl, his commission was made over to Wilmot Darel. The regiment was quartered in Dublin for the ensuing winter, and it was necessary for the new-appointed officer to join his company, and appear a few times on parade, before he took advantage of the two months' leave of absence the earl of Vandeleur had obtained for him from his colonel.

Sensibly affected by the generosity and kindness of the earl, who had not permitted him to break into his own little fortune, but had insisted upon supplying every expence, and grateful for his active friendship, Wilmot considered the passion he had unfortunately imbibed for the countess, the wife of his patron and friend, as a crime heinous and horrible; and though the idea of leaving her was agony, yet he believed that absence was the only means likely to restore his mind to peace, enable him to attend to his duties, and confirm him in

the honourable path he was desirous to pursue.

The gay unfeeling countess of Vandeleur had pressed the stay of Wilmot Darel, because he was a handsome young man, and because she was sick and tired of the commonplace witticisms and compliments of sir Harry Ogle, and annoyed by the noisy merriment of sir Hector Desmond; but there was yet a motive stronger than these—her vanity languished for admiration, for some inexperienced heart to enslave and torture. A short time convinced the countess, that the gentle, sentimental Emily Desmond beheld the pensive, and rather diffident stranger, with an interest that seemed symptomatic of *la belle passion*.

Emily Desmond, though not so strikingly handsome as lady Vandeleur, possessed loveliness of face and figure, softness of voice, and gentleness of manner, likely to make a lasting impression on a heart inexperienced and romantic as Wilmot Darel's. Emily Desmond was timid, delicate and feminine, the direct opposite of the countess, whose vivacity approached

to levity, and whose unshrinking dash and freedom of manner, went to the utmost limits of *haut ton*: but though perfectly indulgent to her own *ad libitum*, she was not equally so to others; and ever on the watch to detect foibles and weaknesses in her friends, she became convinced that Emily Desmond's blush and smile, while conversing with Wilmot Darel, proceeded from growing partiality. Though a married woman, the countess had no intention to suppress her love of admiration, or deny herself the complimentary assiduousness to which she had been accustomed; her situation of wife and mother, introduced no serious or deterring reflection; and her rank only suggested and presented a wider latitude for the indulgence of heartless vanity.

The countess of Vandeleur was not capable of feeling a generous or tender sentiment: her beauty inspired love; but she was sensible of none, except for herself. She had no passions but evil ones; and among these, envy sustained a prominent place; and it was this detestable influence that made her scrutinize every glance of

the soft dove eyes of Emily Desmond, and weigh every word that fell from the lips of Wilmot Darel, till she fancied she detected a mutual partiality, which, if suffered to remain unmolested, might, and it was probable would, ripen into a serious attachment. The idea curled the proud coral lip of the countess with a disdainful smile; and as her eye glanced upon the interesting pair, who were looking over a book of drawings, she thought—"The poor milk-and-water soul, Emily Desmond, may play the sentimental romantic Miss, and fall in love, if she pleases; but I will take care her passion shall be hopeless—Wilmot Darel must not—shall not return her love."

With this malignant and cruel resolve, she led the way to the music-room; and having now no Miss Lambart to rival her, she sat down to the pianoforte, with cheeks glowing, and eyes sparkling with the consciousness of superiority, and played and sang so seductively, that the first spell was cast upon the unsophisticated heart of Wilmot Darel, who listened "*to the me-*

lody of sweet sounds," unsuspecting of the thralldom prepared for him, and the danger into which he was falling; for never had music, much as he loved it, sunk with such ravishing power upon his heart, as while the countess, of Vandeleur, in her best style of taste and expression, warbled—

“ Love slyly on his youthful brow
A silken bandage wears,
And on his bright and golden bow
A rosy garland bears.

But though he hides his sparkling eyes,
Believe not Love is blind;
For when his glittering arrow flies,
The fated heart 'twill find.

And like the garland that he bears,
The passion he inspires,
All fresh and blooming it appears,
But soon as that expires.

Yes, love has all the rose's glow,
With all its perfum'd breath;
What pity it should ever know,
Like that, the flight of death!”

“ Charming! delightful! enchanting!” met the gratified ear of the countess, who, rising from the instrument, requested Miss Desmond to take her place.

The young lady would have declined, but the countess was determined that Darel should be convinced of her superior

voice and science, and would not admit of any excuse. Isabella sat down to the instrument, and played a foil, to set off the brilliancy of her artful friend.

Emily's voice was melodious, but weak, and though a good musician, she was very timid; from her, the countess was certain she had nothing to apprehend, though she gave very sweetly—

“ Why climb I now the moss-clad hill,
Why seek the moonlight grove,
Why linger near the gushing rill,
Or through the forest rove?
What is it now I wish to see,
At morn or closing day,
Since him I love, alas for me!
Now wanders far away.

“ Let happy maids their ringlets twine
With buds of rosy glow,
The willow garland shall be mine,
Still wet with tears of woe:
No charm in flowery wreaths I see,
That bloom at early day,
Since him I love, alas for me!
Now wanders far away.”

And when the last cadence died away, the countess read her own triumph in the expressive countenance of Wilmot Darel.

“ What dismal melancholy ditties you always sing, Emily!” said the lively Isa-

bella; "your songs bear always the same burthen — faithless lovers and broken hearts."

"Perhaps she sings from feeling," observed the countess; "poor child! she may be regretting a false-hearted swain."

"No, really," replied Emily, blushing deeply, "I have no regrets of the sort; but I fear there have been many hearts broken by falsehood, or why have the poets in all ages, and of every country, written so much on the subject?"

"Poets," returned the countess, "live in the region of fiction and romance, and little belief is to be attached to their exaggerated and inflated representations of the characters and hearts of men: not that I would be understood to vindicate them from the charge of inconstancy and selfishness, of which I believe them too often to be justly accused."

"The ladies, I fancy," said sir Harry Ogle, eager to express his opinion, "the ladies are equally culpable, on the score of inconstancy and selfishness, as the gentlemen."

"Poor sir Harry!" replied the countess;

“no doubt you speak from awful experience; what a tremendous catalogue of smiles, compliments, and attentions, accepted without the remotest intention of compensation or return, you must hold against my ungrateful sex! but courage, *mon ami*, you will yet have your revenge; some tender susceptible fair one shall sigh ere long for your carefully-arranged love-locks, and hang enamoured over the inimitable tie of your cravat.”

Wilmot Darel smiled at the irony of the countess, as his dark eye glanced over the person of the little fop, who, with a self-satisfied air, declared himself “highly flattered that a person of her ladyship’s acknowledged taste should notice his hair, and his cravat; to be sure, he did devote some small portion of his time to the study of the appropriate and becoming, but when a gentleman sacrificed to the graces, it was certainly with the hope and intention of rendering himself agreeable to the ladies.

“Which you most undoubtedly are,” rejoined Miss Desmond; “but, sir Harry, you are remarkable for the particular whiteness of your hands; I wish you would

give me the receipt for making your cosmetic."

"Together with my hands, Miss Desmond, if you will accept them," replied sir Harry.

"Well, really it is a generous offer, and very frankly made," said Isabella, laughing.

"Will you accept it?" asked sir Harry, gravely and earnestly, "for I am serious in making the offer, I assure you."

"Then seriously, I must take some time to consider," returned Miss Desmond.

"The honourable Mrs. Chatterton frowned, and shot malignant glances from her green eyes on her blooming rival, who continued to say—"Lady Ogle would undoubtedly sound very pretty, but I am not yet tired of being called Miss Desmond; and perhaps——"

"Perhaps what, fair angel?" urged sir Harry.

"Perhaps papa may not approve, and it is necessary to ask his opinion."

"I see no reason why sir Hector should disapprove," replied sir Harry, in a tone of self-approval; "but if he should, your for-

tune, I understand, is not under his control."

"Your fortune—observe that, Miss Desmond," exclaimed Mrs. Chatterton; "~~it is~~ your fortune sir Harry Ogle has an eye to; but I am persuaded sir Hector Desmond will see through such mercenary views; and you, Miss Desmond, you must be convinced——"

"Perfectly, madam," replied Isabella; "I am quite convinced of the disinterested passion of sir Harry Ogle, and of the sincerity of your friendship, which occasions you to scrutinize so warmly and deeply into the gentleman's motives."

"My friendship, or the purity of my intentions," said Mrs. Chatterton, endeavouring to be calm, "you can have no reason to doubt."

"Certainly not," replied Miss Desmond, "for I have heard you call yourself the particular friend of our family, as long as I can remember any thing; and indeed, my sister and myself have expected that you and sir Hector——"

"I beg you will not mention it," interrupted the widow; "I really never sup-

posed—"But you will oblige me much by changing the subject. The late dear, ever-lamented honourable Mr. Chatterton ~~was~~ a generous, noble-hearted man—a perfect gentleman in every particular, and I can never expect to ~~meet~~ his equal: fortune was no consideration with him; he loved me for myself alone; he was not like the present young men of fashion, who never think of the beauty or amiable qualities of a female, but only of her property and her expectations."

"Why all for love sounds very pretty in a novel," rejoined sir Harry, "but it will not do in real life; and having lived in the world so many more years than I have, you must know this much better than I do, Mrs. Chatterton: the ladies love dress, diamonds, and expensive equipages, and then they are fond of giving expensive entertainments, and frequenting public places of entertainment; and how is this to be done without money? Before a man bestows his person and his title on a female, I do not see that he is to blame for inquiring what aid she can render, to pro-

cure and support the style she is desirous to move in."

The honourable Mrs. Chatterton gave her head a contemptuous toss, as Miss Desmond, with affected seriousness, replied—"Very properly considered, sir Harry. They call me a giddy, inconsiderate girl; but thoughtless as I am, I admire of all others a prudent, calculating man, one who never loses sight of his own interest; and depend upon it, what you have now said will have its due weight with me. Matrimony, as you have very sensibly explained the affair, is a mere matter of barter—you give me a title, and I give you the fortune to support the state and dignity of that title. Well, sir Harry, few gentlemen have your candour, and I promise you I consider it one of the best traits in your character."

Sir Harry bowed, smiled, laid his hand on his heart, and professed himself prodigiously flattered by her approval of his sentiments, and hoped to improve in her good opinion.

"Isabella, my dear sister," said Emily, gravely, "you cannot mean to encourage sir Harry Ogle in the belief——"

"Sir Harry Ogle is at liberty to believe exactly as he pleases," replied Miss Desmond: "he may fancy that youth, beauty, and wealth, are at his command, and pay homage to his person and eloquence, which he may suppose are irresistible; he may divert his imagination with a thousand other extravagant notions, without offending me; for what have I to do with his belief?"

"Every thing," rejoined sir Harry, who began to feel doubtful of the success he had a few moments before considered certain; "your yes, or no, will elevate me to the very pinnacle of happiness, or precipitate me to the lowest gulf of despair."

"Delightful!" exclaimed Miss Desmond. "I never had vanity enough to suppose my charms would make a poet of you, sir Harry, and positively your language is too sublime and pathetic to be humble prose; but if you would have me believe you sincere in your professions, you must write an ode on my Hafez—Is he not a beautiful creature?" continued she, patting the silky head of a little spaniel, that, with the boldness of an indulged fa-

avourite, had taken possession of part of her chair.

"An ode!" exclaimed sir Harry, with horror in his countenance, "me write an ode! the thing is altogether impossible! 'pon my honour as a gentleman, I never wrote an ode in my life; I always had a dislike to poetry, and if I was to attempt to write verse, it would be——"

"Absolute nonsense," interrupted Mrs. Chatterton; "no acquaintance of sir Harry Ogle's would suspect him of being guilty of writing tolerable prose; and as to poetry, it does not belong to his class."

"Certainly it does not," returned sir Harry, "and I am proud to acknowledge the justice of that remark; persons in my sphere ought not to rob the poor devils, who have only the labour of their brains to live by: 'pon my honour, I would not be an author for the universe: but I flatter myself I can write sense, Mrs. Chatterton, though I have not the misfortune to be a poet."

"Do you call it a misfortune," asked Emily Desmond, "to be distinguished by the possession of genius? Superior talent

cannot surely be considered a misfortune, unless indeed by exalting the mind and refining the taste, it renders the possessor more susceptible of the ignorance and grossness of the beings by whom he is surrounded; and by proving to him how little the mass of mankind are capable of participating in his ideas or feelings, or of understanding the sublimities and beauties of his effusions."

"Very romantic indeed, Miss Emily," said Mrs. Chatterton, "but not exactly polite; for without being poets, I fancy it is possible for people to have thoughts, and feelings, and good sense too; for my part, I am sure I never wished for, or made the least pretence to genius——"

"As Audrey says—'*You thank the gods you are not poetical*,'" interrupted Miss Desmond, laughing.

"Yes, Miss Desmond, I am thankful that I have no tendency that way; for after all, the very best poetry is only fiction; and I have no desire to tell a parcel of falsehoods, just for the sake of amusing silly boys and sentimental young ladies, who, while they read my works, would

say—"What a delightful thought! what a charming writer!" yet would the next hour turn up their noses at me if they knew I was poor, and had not a carriage to ride in, and could not afford to give half-a-dozen entertainments during the season."

"Alas, poor genius!" sighed Emily; "it is indeed too often fated to a life of penury, while ignorance and stupidity bask in the sunshine of affluence."

"So much for the liberality of the world," said Miss Desmond, "and the encouragement of genius."

"I am glad I have no talent for rhyming," rejoined sir Harry; "for though we have a few who have made fortunes by their brains, your poets, in general, are poor devils, with hungry looks and threadbare coats."

"You would rather be wedded to a rich heiress than to '*immortal verse*,'" said Miss Desmond.

"To your mind then it doth by far appear,
Better to have ten thousand pounds a-year,
Than to possess the gifted poet's claim,
To hungry genius and to empty fame."

"Egad, ten thousand pounds a-year is so desirable," observed sir Harry, "that a man must be a fool who would not rather have such an income, than be the first poet in the world; let who will take genius, give me solid cash."

"Different persons have different opinions," said Emily Desmond; "but to me, talent appears far more worthy of estimation than riches."

"You are too young, Miss Emily," replied Mrs. Chatterton, "to have a decided opinion. As yet you have had no experience of the world; when you are a few years older, and have seen more of life, you will set a greater value upon wealth."

"It may be so," returned Emily; "but at present I worship talent, and consider gold as ~~gross~~, compared with the riches of genius; and if I value wealth at all, it is because it gives the power to patronize and encourage those who write, not only to amuse, but to instruct and amend the world."

"Really, Miss Emily, you are so warm in defence of authors, that I begin to suspect you write verses yourself," said Mrs.

Chatterton: "and now I recollect to have heard that your great-aunt, Mrs. Annabella Kilmarnock, was a writer of odes and sonnets."

"Her genius, madam, was not an heirloom; and if it had, recollect," said Emily, "I could not claim it, being the youngest of my father's children."

"And I, the eldest, disclaim it," rejoined Miss Desmond, "being a plain matter-of-fact person, without the slightest dash of poetry in my composition; not that I consider it impossible for any person inclined to take the trouble to produce an elegy, an ode, or a sonnet; only take a few opening rose-buds, a sprig or two of myrtle, cypress, or willow, a pearl, a star, the crescent moon, the wind, the ocean, a mountain, a sprinkling of dew-drops, a grove, an abundance of sighs and tears, with regret, hope, expectation, and despair; arrange them in a pretty sentimental manner; and with the addition of faded leaves, sinking ships, and broken vows, you may produce verses."

"For reviewers to cut up, and shopkeepers to wrap round their merchandize,"

said Emily. "To make rhymes may be possible to an ordinary capacity; but the sublimity, the tenderness, the fire of poetry, can only belong to those on whom Heaven has bestowed a mind irradiated by genius."

Sir Harry Ogle was tired of the subject, and slyly pinched the ear of Hafez, who howled aloud, to the great relief of Mrs. Chatterton, who having no sympathy with genius, was ready to yawn.

Wilmot Darel had taken no part in the conversation, but had given his entranced attention undividedly to the countess of Vandeleur, who, with heartless vanity, displayed all her fascinations, to prevent the artless Emily Desmond from creating an interest in the bosom of a young man, whose taste and sentiment would have attached to her modest loveliness, though between him and herself, her own wedded state placed an insuperable bar; but that the daughters of sir Hector Desmond should be compelled to acknowledge her their superior in beauty as well as rank, she determined on the conquest of Wilmot Darel's heart, if it were only to excite their

envy, and demonstrate her power to make him wretched; and never was heart more fully prepared by romance and enthusiasm to receive tender impressions, than his, whom she had cruelly selected for the display of her triumph.

On the night of his arrival, when Darel was conducted to the magnificent chamber prepared for his repose, he remained in sleepless ecstasy, tossing on his pillow, meditating on the beauty of the countess of Vandeleur, on

“ Her eye’s blue languish,
And her golden hair ;”

her voice, her look, full of animation and tenderness, so different to any thing he had ever seen in any other female, raised emotions in his bosom never felt before; nor did the recollection of her being already a wife enable him to think of her with composure; a few short hours had proved to him the susceptibility of his nature, and reason told him that his future peace and honour depended on immediate flight; in absence he might forget his impossible wishes, and at a distance he might

remind the earl of Vandeleur of the friendship he had professed, and solicit his advice and interest.

Having made up his mind to decline the invitation of the dangerous beauty, and depart the following morning, his heart throbbed with less violence; and breathing a prayer for fortitude to resist temptation, he sunk to repose.

In the morning, he remembered something that he had been told of lady Vandeleur always taking breakfast in her dressing-room, and he sat down to write a note of thanks for her hospitality, and to declare his intention to proceed to Dublin, where he hoped to meet the earl; but before he had well arranged his thoughts, a servant informed him the countess was in the breakfast-parlour, and expected him.

"It is impossible then," thought Wilmot, "to depart without seeing her. Well, no matter, my resolve is taken; there can be no harm in offering her my wishes for her happiness, and taking leave in person."

Unhappy Wilmot! how wrong an estimate did he make of the strength of his

mind! how unable was he to resist the eloquence of eyes, whose well-tutored glances penetrated and thrilled the pulses of his heart! how utterly incapable was he of resisting the invitation so warmly repeated, and urged by the Circe, to wait the return of her lord, whose movements were so erratic, that he might have left Dublin, when his own wishes were traitors to his honour, and the sophistry of love sounded like the advice of reason!—"I will guard my heart, and suppress my wishes," thought Wilmot; "I will constantly remember that this enchanting woman is the wife of him whose friendship I left my home to solicit; her beauty shall henceforth be to me like that of a distant planet, the brilliancy of which I may gaze on and admire, but cannot hope to reach."

Such are the delusions cherished by young hearts—such the fallacious reasoning that ruins peace and virtue; for while Wilmot Darcy believed he was preserving his honourable principles, by reflecting on his own expectations, and the sacred rite that had given her to another, he perceiv-

ed not the influence lady Vandeleur was gaining over him, and that she was unfeelingly binding him in her chains, by assuming a softness and tenderness of manner foreign to her real character, by affecting a congeniality of taste and sentiment with him, who, in the short space of a week, became her devoted slave, a puppet, that moved but at her pleasure, who rode, walked, read, spoke, and almost thought, as she directed.

Miss Desmond, a lively unthinking girl, was not displeased, in the absence of some more agreeable admirer, to flirt a little with sir Harry Ogle, and this prevented her from observing the very particular degree of favour and notice the countess bestowed on Mr. Darel; and Mrs. Chatterton felt too much vexed, and was too deeply occupied in observing the flirtation between her perfidious lover, sir Harry Ogle, and Miss Desmond, to pay attention to the conduct of her niece; but Emily Desmond, who had, from the hour of his introduction, felt interested by the person and conversation of Mr. Darel, beheld the impression made by lady Vandeleur with

sorrow and alarm. To the generous liberal-minded Emily, his want of fortune was of no importance—he was well born, and well educated; these were, in her estimation, sufficient possessions, and she felt it would have given her supreme felicity to bestow her wealth upon him, in exchange for his undivided heart; but it offended her delicacy as much as her pride, to see the preference he evinced on all occasions for the countess, whose freedom of conduct, had she been a single woman, would, according to her notions of propriety, have been highly reprehensible, but as a wife and mother, it was absolutely shocking. Was it possible that Wilmot Darel, new as he acknowledged himself to the world, and ignorant of fashionable vices, could be profligate and licentious by nature? could he, in the seclusion in which he had been brought up, amidst the grand sublimities of forest, mountain, and lake, have nursed and matured principles of the worst and most evil tendency? and could she, so lately elevated to a rank which neither her birth nor her fortune entitled her to expect, could she be so weak, so ungrate-

ful, and depraved, as to disgrace her high station, and repay with dishonour him who had bestowed upon her an ancient title and splendid fortune, with every luxurious indulgence that affluence could purchase? But in believing that the countess of Vandeleur felt a passion for Wilmot Darel, and was likely to indulge that passion to criminality, Emily Desmond did her ladyship injustice; for though she disregarded the admonition, that—“*Cæsar’s wife should not only be virtuous, but seem so,*” she had neither the inclination nor intention to cast herself from the pinnacle she had so successfully manœuvred to attain: to blight and disappoint the prospects of those whom youth and beauty rendered attractive, to prove her own superior charms, by robbing them of lovers, and exercise dominion over the hearts of all the men who had the misfortune to be introduced to her acquaintance, to monopolize admiration and attention wherever she appeared, had always been, and still continued to be, the first, and most ardent desire of the countess; her heart, cold and selfish, was invulnerable to tender or generous senti-

ments: the only passions she was capable of feeling or indulging, were ambition, self-love, and envy; the latter of which was excited to absolute rancour, by the attention Wilmot Darel appeared disposed to pay to Emily Desmond. Determined to nip this attachment in the bud, and mortify the lovely gentle girl, the artful countess called into action all those witcheries and blandishments by which she had for a time enchanted lord Conway; she smiled with angel sweetness, talked sentiment, in a tone of heart-attesting feeling, with looks of tenderness, and eyes glittering with tears, that resembled violets bathed in dew-drops; and to complete her spells, she called in the powerful and seductive aid of music, till she threw the innocent unpretending Emily into the shade, and with systematic cruelty dazzled, astonished, and subjugated the reason and the heart of her hapless victim.

But Wilmot Darel, though painfully sensible of the influence she had gained over his feelings, did not yield himself the slave of her beauty, without being conscious that he was violating the com-

mandment, "*thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife*," and shuddering at the violence and criminality of the passion her fascinations inspired; and when the earl of Vandeleur placed the commission he had purchased for him in his hand, the conviction of his base ingratitude so glared upon his conscience, that his limbs trembled, his lips grew pale, and he was near fainting.

Unsuspecting of the state of his heart, the earl mistook this overpowering emotion for excess of gratitude, and joy at having so speedily and unexpectedly obtained the object he had so earnestly and ardently desired: but had the earl even penetrated the secret thoughts of Darel, with his lax principles, and dislike of his wife, he would only have smiled at the youth's simplicity, and enjoyed his conflicts; to prove his friend a consummate villain, and his wife frail and guilty, would have given him pleasure rather than regret, who desired nothing so much as the power to dissolve his marriage, and who remembered that he could for no cause, save that of adultery, separate from her

whom he considered as the bar to the happiness he might have enjoyed with Miss Lambart, and from whom his hated union with her had divided him perhaps for ever : but altogether ignorant of Darel's feelings, he hastened his departure for Dublin, and with sincerity bade him expedite his return, observing to him, that the daughters of sir Hector Desmond were both of them fine girls, had handsome fortunes at their own disposal, and, as far as he could learn, were unengaged.—“ And with your person and address, Wilmot,” said the earl, “ no doubt you would be a successful wooer.”

The expressive countenance of Wilmot Darel was suffused with the crimson flush of shame, as, smothering a sigh, he replied —“ At present I do not think of marrying ; I have seen nothing of the world ; nor could I endure the idea of being raised to affluence by a wife.”

“ Few men,” returned the earl, “ are so scrupulous about the means of acquiring wealth ; and when you are better acquainted with the usages of life, you will not be

so fastidious. "But perhaps you decline acting upon my hint, from being pre-engaged; but of all follies, Wilmot, mark me, and be warned in time, there is no folly so certain to bring on bitter repentance, as that of marrying for love."

"I am not likely to fall into this error," said Wilmot, pleased that the approach of monsieur Lemain put an end to a conversation that made him despise his own hypocrisy, and feel painfully conscious of ingratitude to the friendship most liberally avinced by the earl of Vandeleur.

'Sir Harry Ogle, in a very few days after the arrival of the new guests, had the extreme mortification to prove the caprice and fickleness of woman: the behaviour of Isabella Desmond was entirely altered; she no longer admired his white hands, his perfumed love-locks, or the tie of his cravat; she paid no attention to his compliments; she never listened to, or laughed at, his *bon mots*; she never extolled his *jeux d'esprits*; she took no notice of him at the breakfast-table, and declined his arm when he offered to conduct her from the drawing-room to the *salle à manger*.

This was a most unexpected change, and the little baronet, in spite of the favourable opinion he entertained of his own perfections, could not avoid perceiving that his hopes of gaining the fair one's hand were blighted; the tall figure of Cyril Percy, overtopping him by the head, had caught her fancy; he engrossed all her smiles; they rode and walked together, and took pains to prevent him joining them in their morning rides and evening rambles in the park and shrubberies.

Sir Harry Ogle, though highly offended by the conduct of Miss Desmond, whom he mentally called a jilt, could not bring himself to ask from her an explanation of her altered manner, or to express his resentment by demanding satisfaction from his rival; he therefore tried to persuade himself that he was perfectly indifferent about the matter; but though he talked more nonsense, and used more grimaces than ever, his mortification was so evident, that captain Largrish laughingly advised him to put an end to his torments, by hanging himself upon one of the willows that hung over the fish-pond. Sir Harry

Ogle affected to laugh, shrugged his shoulders, laid his hand upon his breast, and protested, 'pon his honour as a gentleman, he wished Miss Desmond all possible happiness, and was proud to say her preference of Mr. Percy did not at all disturb his; he then began affectedly singing—

“ I thought her mine, but false as fair,
 She smiles upon another ;
 Then leave her go, I do not care,
 How oft she change her lover.

Some other fool may be her jest,
 It matters not to me ;
 For when my suit to her I press'd,
 My heart as hers was free.

I call'd her dear, but what of that,
 My words ne'er touch'd her mind ;
 And her replies were empty chat,
 As hollow as the wind.

“ We part as happy as we met,
 It pains not her or me ;
 To us 'tis easy to forget,
 With hearts at liberty.”

“ Bravo ! bravissimo ! ” exclaimed captain Langrish ; “ it gives me pleasure to see you bear up so manfully on this trying occasion ; there are but few persons in your situation that would conduct themselves with such forbearance.”

Sir Harry did not like the insinuation conveyed in the word forbearance, but having a mortal antipathy to pistols and swords, he replied—"I am really not aware, captain Langrish, of having met with any thing that required forbearance or——"

"Nonsense!" interrupted captain Langrish, "do I not know you are a discarded lover?"

"Pardon me if I contradict that assertion," returned sir Harry; "you labour under a mistake, captain Langrish; I never was discarded."

"Well, forsaken then," said the captain; "it amounts to the same thing; but you need not be so shy in expressing your feelings, for I can guess how great must be your disappointment in losing a devilish fine girl, and, what is of much more consequence——"

Provoked almost beyond bearing, the enraged baronet exclaimed—"Confound it, captain Langrish, I tell you again I care no more for Miss Desmond than she does for me; and as to her fortune——"

"You despise it," resumed the tanta-

lizing Langrish; "you have a soul above sordid views; no one can doubt your noble contempt, your detestation of a mercenary choice in marriage; love, pure love, no other motive would actuate you to pay your addresses to a lady. Well, such disinterested sentiments certainly deserved reward. Yonder I see Miss Desmond; I will instantly go and inform her that it was not her fortune, a good seven thousand pounds a-year, no mean temptation though, between ourselves, but her beautiful self you were in love with."

"Tell Miss Desmond nothing from or concerning me, I beg, captain Langrish," replied sir Harry; "pray let the lady please herself, for I promise you I am perfectly easy, and will not hang, drown, poison, or pistol myself, for any woman in existence."

"And this you allow me to repeat to Miss Desmond."

"If you like; perhaps it may offend her; but *n'importe*—I am perfectly easy about her." And in this declaration sir Harry Ogle was sincere; he certainly cared very little for the young lady, but her large

fortune — “*ay, there was the rub,*” her large fortune would, on various accounts, have been vastly convenient, and to find it elude his grasp, when he thought himself so sure of obtaining it, was indeed a serious disappointment. But sir Harry’s conceit and self-love prevented him from falling into sickness or despair—he called to his support his never-failing consolation, the maternal observation of lady Ogle, that it was yet time enough for her dear Harry to take a wife.

Cheered with this recollection, sir Harry determined to prove to the capricious, fair one, that he was nothing moved, or depressed in spirits, by her dereliction, but thought of and beheld her with perfect indifference. Emily Desmond’s fortune was equal to her sister’s, but she was far too grave and reserved for his taste, and she had, from the hour of their introduction, to each other, treated him with distant and cold politeness, that forbid all approach to intimacy. To gain her regard, appeared hopeless and absolute waste of time; for in his opinion, she was destined to figure

through life in the character of an old maid.

The honourable Mrs. Chatterton sir Harry had seriously offended, while under the deluding belief that he had secured the heart of Miss Desmond: this was a subject for regret. To please Miss Desmond he had ridiculed the widow, and talked of her age—an offence a woman seldom forgives: this was a sad error, for the widow's fortune was extremely desirable; and at one time, he knew he had only to ask her hand and obtain it. The tall Cyril Percy was a rival too formidable to contend with, and he feared the honourable Mrs. Chatterton would never be reconciled to him, who had despised her green eyes, and talked about her ill-formed hands and ugly nails; and worse even than this, had said, to her face, she was old enough to be his mother.—“I wish,” thought sir Harry, “I had left the castle before the Desmonds arrived; I might have met a match to suit me—I could have pursued my plans, secure from the observation of the widow; and if I had not succeeded to my wish, I could have returned to her at last:

for, plague on it, her estates are far from contemptible, and I was a fool to affront the old woman—I ought to have been more circumspect—I ought to have kept up an appearance of regard for her, till I had obtained an absolute promise from Miss Desmond.”

In the midst of this self-upbraiding, it struck sir Harry to attempt conciliating the widow, and renewing his addresses; but the honourable Mrs. Chatterton was jealous of the little fop's flirtation with Miss Desmond, and, too deeply offended, by his remarks on her person and age, to accept his apology, or credit his protestations that he had no regard or intention respecting Miss Desmond, but was merely trying the strength of her affection, by pretending to pay homage at the shrine of another.—“She is a woman, and will believe,” thought sir Harry; “she is a widow, and will be won.” But here his vanity led him to a wrong conclusion, for Mrs. Chatterton, in the midst of her indignation and resentment, had reflected that ladies of a certain age committed a grand error, when they married young men, to whom

it was likely their fortunes held out far greater attraction than their persons; who, having gained possession of their wealth, would neglect, and probably ill-treat them, in return for the folly of having enabled them to indulge in luxury and extravagance, and seek pleasure every where but at home. These prudent reflections soothed the agitated spirits of the widow, and reconciled her to the perfidy of sir Harry Ogle, and enabled her to give a contemptuous denial to his renewed suit—it also brought her to the resolve not to continue a solitary widow, but to close at once with the proposal of sir Hector Desmond, who had generously offered settlements beyond her expectations.

In consenting to marry sir Hector, Mrs. Chatterton was not actuated by any particular liking for the man, but by the hope to plague sir Harry Ogle and vex Miss Desmond, who had often, in her hearing, expressed her disapprobation of her father taking a second wife, and her belief that he never would give them a stepmother.

While amusing herself with the vanity and folly of sir Harry Ogle, Miss Des-

mond had no idea she was taking a lover from Mrs. Chatterton; for she never believed that a person at her time of life would encourage, or think of, a matrimonial engagement with so young, so conceited, and so frivolous a man; and still less did she suppose, that a feeling of revenge for her having, in the gaiety of her heart, flirted with the inconstant Lothario, had urged the spiteful little widow to accept the hand of her father, without even dropping a hint of his intention, which was actually the case; for as soon as the proper settlements were arranged and signed, the honourable Mrs. Chatterton met sir Hector Desmond at the altar of the parish church, and in the presence of her own maid and sir Hector's groom, their nuptials were privately solemnized, which the lady wished to be kept secret till they left for Limerick. But sir Hector, in the joy of his heart, having taken too much wine, when the ladies had withdrawn after dinner, disclosed the morning's transaction, and was obliged to drink bumper after bumper to his own and his lady's felicity, till he fell from his chair, insensible of the

happiness of being a bridegroom, and unconscious that the disappointed sir Harry had called him a savage of the woods, and wished that his green-eyed bride could see him lolling out his tongue, and rolling his eyes in unmeaning and frightful restlessness.

This utter defeat of all his hopes in the discovery of Mrs. Chatterton's marriage, occasioned sir Harry Ogle to drink more wine than his weak head could bear, and he staggered after the earl of Vandeleur into the drawing-room, to enjoy Miss Desmond's surprise and mortification, whom he had many times heard say, she could not endure the thought of her father marrying a second wife.

When the earl of Vandeleur announced the marriage, the ladies received the intelligence as a jest; but when the situation of sir Hector was described by captain Langrish, and confirmed by sir Harry Ogle, who declared, 'pon his honour, he pitied the bride, so shamefully neglected, so absolutely rivalled by the charms of sparkling, ruby-coloured claret—"A rival," continued he, maliciously, "that is not likely to

lose the power of attracting, for age increases its intoxicating charms, and gives it a stronger hold upon the senses, and deprives——”

“ It has deprived you, not of wit, for that you never possessed, but of good manners,” said the bride, starting up from the ottoman, on which she was seated. “ Stand out of the way, you chattering ape,” continued she, pushing sir Harry aside, whose head being unsteady from the libations he had swallowed, he lost his equilibrium, and measured his length on the carpet, to the great amusement of the company, who enjoyed a long laugh at the expence of the little fop, who was floundering about, unable to rise.

The new-made lady Desmond, burning with rage against sir Harry Ogle and her bridegroom, bounced from the room to ascertain his condition.

“ *Fall'n, fall'n, fall'n, from his high estate,*” said Percy, laughing, and pointing to sir Harry, who was making vain efforts to recover his legs.

“ Not very high,” replied captain Lang-

rish; "I do not think he measures more than the *altitude of a chapin*."

"*Alias* a quart pot," resumed Percy. "Do you hear that, sir Harry? captain Langrish says you are not higher than a quart pot."

"'Pon my honour, now that is a very impertinent observation," replied sir Harry, hickuping, and scrambling upon his feet, in which effort he trod on Miss Desmond's spaniel, who set up a lamentable howl.

"Defend us from this intolerable noise," said the countess of Vandeleur, stopping her ears.

Sir Harry Ogle attempted to apologize, but could get no farther than—"I am prodigiously hurt," which he repeated several times.

"And so is my poor little Hafez, or he would not have complained so loudly," said Miss Desmond. "But I think, sir Harry, you will do well to retire, and examine your hurts, for which I am persuaded you will find sleep a most excellent remedy."

"The prescription cannot fail of proving highly beneficial," rejoined Percy, "and I

advise sir Harry Ogle to give it immediate trial."

Sir Harry Ogle having retired, Miss Desmond openly expressed her disapprobation of her father's marriage.

The countess of Vandeleur merely said, Mrs. Chatterton had acted very slyly; but she did not express what she felt—a fear that her aunt's fortune, which she had believed would one day devolve upon her, would now enrich the Desmond family.

Emily Desmond said nothing, though she did not, any more than her sister, like her father's marriage; but she comforted herself with the remembrance, that their fortunes could not suffer from the influence of a stepmother, and that if she rendered their home unpleasant, they had it in their power to seek another. But while Miss Desmond made no secret of her disapprobation, and avowed her regret that her father had taken a wife, Cyril Percy considered it a circumstance in his favour, being likely to forward his wishes, and expedite his marriage with Miss Desmond, who had given him sufficient encourage-

ment to induce a belief that his addresses were agreeable to her.

The profligate, free-thinking Cyril Percy had run into excesses that had dissipated his own fortune, and worn out the generosity of his friends, who found that to supply his demands, would be to bring ruin on themselves. Some recent losses rendered money absolutely necessary, and matrimony appeared the means likeliest to supply him with cash, to discharge debts of honour, which had grown troublesome, for he had no longer an estate to mortgage, or a relation to whom he could apply, either to lend him a sum sufficient to remove his difficulties, or to become his security to those usurers who, at an enormous interest, supply gamblers and unthinking heirs with the means to draw inevitable ruin on themselves and their families. Satisfied that Miss Desmond's fortune was at her own disposal, he artfully contrived to heighten her dislike of her father's ~~bride~~, to persuade her that her father's house, of which she had so long been the mistress, would now be no home for her, and that her future happiness could

only be ensured by her marrying—" And if I could hope," said the artful Percy, " that you would bestow your hand on me——"

Miss Desmond smiled assentingly, as she said—" And if I was silly enough to believe your professions, and consent to marry you——"

" It should be the business of my life to adore you, and render your home happy."

The fine person of Cyril Percy had captivated the weak heart of Isabella Desmond, and in an evil hour she promised to be his. When informed of her sister's intention to marry Mr. Percy, Emily hoped she intended to obtain the approbation of their father.

" Sir Hector Desmond," replied Isabella, " married without considering it necessary to name his intention to me; and as I want but a few weeks of being of age, I consider myself at liberty to act as it pleases me."

" But recollect, my dear Isabella, that Mr. Percy is an absolute stranger, born in another country; you will surely inquire

into his fortune and connections before you place the happiness of your future life in his keeping. Dearest, dearest Isabella, remember marriage is a momentous affair, which can only be dissolved by death: let me entreat you will consider before——”

“ My dear little prudent sister, I have considered and inquired. Lord Vandeleur knows that Percy belongs to a noble family. He has himself told me he is poor; what more can I wish to learn?” said Isabella; “ he is handsome, well bred, and accomplished, with learning in abundance—is not this sufficient?”

“ I think not,” replied Emily; “ for your sake, I wish——”

“ The man was rich,” interrupted Isabella; “ well, so he is in wit and good humour; and he has, he tells me, a very wealthy uncle, to whose estates he is heir. You shake your head incredulously, as if you thought Percy had imposed upon me; or perhaps you think, with your favourite Hamlet, ‘ while the grass grows the steed starves;’ but this will not be the case, for my fortune will secure us from poverty.”

Sir Hector Desmond did not approve

his daughter's choice of Mr. Percy; his want of fortune was with him an insurmountable objection; and as lady Desmond had consented to his daughters continuing to reside with him till they married, he wished Isabella to return home with him immediately, that her acquaintance with Percy might be broken off; but the young lady at once avowed her determination never to live under the *surveillance* of a stepmother; and the countess of Vandeleur, glad of an opportunity to vex and contradict her aunt, declared she should consider herself insulted, if Miss Desmond was not suffered to remain to be her bridemaid, when she was re-married to the earl."

Sir Hector, finding advice and remonstrance ineffectual, forbade Isabella to expect pity or assistance from him, when she was reduced to poverty, which he felt certain would be the case if she married Percy. Miss Desmond hoped she never should require his assistance. Emily wept as she received the parting embrace of her father, and promised to return home after

the wedding, which was to take place on the earl's birthday.

Percy had arranged with Miss Desmond to receive her hand at the same altar, and at the same time that the earl and countess renewed their marriage vows: but while he professed to adore Isabella, and determined to marry her, the thoughts of Cyril Percy were actually occupied by the countess of Vandeleur, whom he considered a much finer woman, and whose manners were so inviting, so utterly free from prudery, or anything bordering on reserve, that to wed the brunette, and make love to the blonde, seemed to his libertine fancy, not only possible, but actually likely to come to pass; for Miss Desmond was engaged to him by solemn promise, and the blue languishing eyes of the countess wandered from the sentimental enthusiast Darel, to him, with glances of encouragement; but at present those glances must pass disregarded; his pecuniary affairs wore a desperate aspect—a rich wife, must first be secured, and then——But the earl of Vandeleur was his particular friend, and honour protested

against his attempting to alienate the affections of a wife from her husband.

Percy smiled as these thoughts passed rapidly through his brain—merely passed, for they made no stay or impression. An atheist and a gambler, he scoffed at religion, and ridiculed all institutions founded on divine or moral laws. His notions of honour were confined to demanding satisfaction, on the bare suspicion of insult, and paying debts contracted at hazard and rouge-et-noir. Such was the man whom the young, rich, lovely, but imprudent Isabella Desmond, had chosen to be the keeper of her happiness, the arbitrator of her future destiny, who, like a demon, beheld her confiding love, resolving to return it with the basest ingratitude.

“ Soft-hearted woman, alas ! it is for thee
To love, to suffer, and endure ; just Heaven !
Shall man, the lawless libertine, go free,
Nor feel one pang of all that he has given ? ”

CHAP. II.

Blue roll the waters, blue the sky,
Spreads like an ocean hung on high.

— . — — —
The waves on either shore lay there,
Calm, clear, and azure as the air ;
And scarce their foam the pebbles shook
But murmur'd meekly, as the brook,
The winds were pillow'd on the waves.

Sirge of Corinth.

.....

The groves, and lawns, and verdant bowers,
Breathe the rich scent of shrubs and flowers,
And all that wealth and art can give,
Seems in the wide domain to live :
Oh, this might surely Eden prove,
Where o'er pure fountains roses bend,
Did not the ruthless tyrant Love,
His poisons with their odours blend.

THE dowager countess of Vandeleur was by no means a disconsolate widow, nor at all inclined to deny herself any of the pleasures and indulgences that rank and wealth could purchase ; but regard for appearances, to which she had ever paid a slavish respect, pointed out the propriety of secluding herself from public amusements.

the reflection, that she had not committed herself by confiding her wishes and designs to any person.

We have before spoke of the poverty of lady Ogle, who found it so difficult, owing to the extreme selfishness of her son, to keep up appearances with the world. Lady Ogle was a careful, managing woman; but in spite of all her efforts, she was poor, so poor that she gladly and eagerly availed herself of any invitation that gave her an opportunity to place her servants on board wages, and enabled her to save the expences of house-keeping.

Previous to their visit to lady Clare, the prudent mother closeted her daughter, to whom she expatiated, in a most pathetic manner, on the many and various inconveniences to which persons in narrow circumstances were subjected.—“Among which, the turning of dresses,” said lady Ogle, pointing to a chair on which lay some silk in a heap, “which your maid considering her property, does not care what injury they sustain by her carelessness; then the negligence and imperti-

nence of tradespeople, clamorous to be paid their paltry accounts."

"Very true," returned Miss Ogle, with a deep sigh; "could any one have supposed that good-for-nothing creature, Mrs. Blisset, when I asked her to make me a new bonnet, would have point blank refused, and told me, when the bill she had sent in was paid, she should be happy to serve me? But no, the impertinent creature shall never work for me again."

"Well, well, my dear Flora, you must be patient till you have the power to retaliate," said lady Ogle; "and in order to obtain this power, we must employ our wits."

"In what way?" asked Miss Ogle; "I am sure I would do any thing to amend our narrow circumstances."

"Spoke like a prudent, considerate, and dutiful child," said lady Ogle: "I wish your brother sir Harry was only as tractable as you are; but he was always self-willed, and wise in his own conceit: you know, Flora, my love, he never takes my advice on any occasion—heigho! I expect every day to hear that he is going to

be married, and in that case our narrow circumstances would be even more contracted, to avoid which I can perceive only one way."

"And which way is that?" asked Miss Ogle.

"Why you, my dear Flora, you must marry a rich husband."

"I am sure I should be very glad to embrace the means," replied the young lady; "but where am I to find him?"

"I have found him for you," replied her ladyship. "What do you think of sir Horace Clare?"

"I am sure I do not know; I have never seen him since we were both children, and used to play together; I recollect he was a good-natured boy, and used to call me his little wife, and that is all I remember about him."

"And that is more than sufficient," said lady Ogle, "if you play your cards cunningly. I saw him at Carrickfergus last summer, and he is a very good-looking light-complexioned man; but his person is of no sort of consequence."

“Certainly not, if he is rich,” replied Flora.

“I am proud to think, my love,” resumed her ladyship, “that you have profited so well by my instructions; none but a simpleton throws away a thought on a man’s person or his age; it is his rent-roll, and the settlement he will be able to make, that is alone worth consideration.”

“And whether he has the spirit to live according to his wealth, for I should not like to marry a rich miser,” observed Miss Ogle, “unless he would promise to die immediately, and leave me uncontrolled mistress of his wealth.”

“Why to be a rich young widow, is certainly very desirable,” said her ladyship; “but, Flora, sir Horace Clare is as likely to live as you are; and he is not, I believe, ill-tempered; but a husband’s temper is not of much consequence, if he is rich, and not penurious; at any rate, a sensible, clever woman will know how to manage, be the temper good or bad; and I think, Miss Ogle, educated and instructed as you have been by me, you would be at no loss for expedients to——”

"Never fear me—I have treasured all your lessons, mamma," replied the young lady. "But is sir Horace Clare a person likely to marry?"

"Any man, at sir Horace Clare's age, is likely to marry," said lady Ogle, "if you have tact enough to flatter him properly, by agreeing with his opinions, humouring his tastes, admiring every thing he likes, and condemning every thing he disapproves; only be particular in observing what employments, what amusements, and what temper he approves, whether grave or gay, and by carefully following up his bent, I have no doubt but you may be lady Clare."

Thus instructed, Miss Ogle commenced her attack on the heart of sir Horace Clare, who being a lively, generous, good-tempered young man, apparently not given to look into characters and intentions, appeared much pleased with the plausibility of lady Ogle, and the sprightliness of her daughter, who on a hint from her mamma, to whom lady Clare had mentioned her son's particular predilection for the sea, and that he had only been prevented from en-

tering the navy by her tears and solicitations, pretended to admire no sort of reading so much as voyages; excursions in the beautiful yacht, of which sir Horace was the owner and commander, was preferred by the persevering Flora to any other amusement; and his singing of sea songs, of which he had an abundance, which he gave with good taste and infinite humour, she declared was inimitable, and more delightful and gratifying to her ears than all the finest songs of the finest composers.

This was downright flattering on her part, for Miss Ogle had been told it was unfashionable to admire any but Italian music, and that sea songs were considered vulgar and obsolete.

Sir Horace Clare possessed a manly agreeable voice; he knew but very little of music, yet he always sang in time and tune; and his manner was so pleasing, that it compensated for his want of science.

Near a fortnight had elapsed; Miss Ogle had walked, rode, sailed, laughed, danced, and sung, with sir Horace Clare; but did not seem at all nearer the haven of her

wishes—matrimony, than when she commenced her attack upon his heart.

Lady Ogle thought he ate too heartily, and looked too cheerful, for a man in love; yet Flora appeared a prodigious favourite, and different persons had been known to be differently affected, when placed under the self-same circumstances.

The following day, a heavy shower of rain came on, as the young people were walking in the park, and fearful that Flora should get wet, sir Horace caught her up in his arms, and carried her into the house. This certainly was a very lover-like piece of gallantry. Lady Ogle's hopes revived, and she became downright impatient for the declaration.

When questioned by her mamma, Miss Ogle sighed, and shook her head, protesting she thought sir Horace had a heart harder than a rock, for so far from making a declaration, he always expressed a decided aversion to matrimony, which, he said, involved so many cares and responsibilities.

“ This certainly must be owing to some

failure on your part," said her ladyship; "had you followed my advice——"

Flora protested she had conformed in every particular with the mode of conduct she had been instructed to pursue.—"But sir Horace," continued the young lady, "sir Horace laughs at the idea of falling in love, and says, if ever he prevails upon himself to marry, it will be when he gets old and gouty, and wants a nurse."

"Oh the unfeeling savage!" exclaimed her ladyship; "I really believed he had been of a more tractable disposition; why, he must be absolutely destitute of humanity; his passion for the sea has made him as pitiless of a woman's delicacy, as a shark or any other monster of the deep. Not marry till he stands in need of a nurse! Why, in all probability, if you wait for that office, Flora, you will be grey-headed and toothless. I never was more seriously disappointed in my life; I thought every thing was in train, when I saw him so much more attentive to you than he was to Miss Ormond, the great fortune that dined with us yesterday."

"Yes, mamma, but then sir Horace

knows Miss Ormond is engaged to his friend, Mr. Cavers, and that they are to be married next week. Sir Horace always treats me with attention; but he means nothing for all that; for not two hours ago, he asked me if I remembered, when I was a child, major O'Grady taking me up before him on his horse, and telling me he would run away with me?"

"I wish, with all my heart," returned her ladyship, "he would run away with you now, for he is immensely rich, and still a bachelor."

"I am sure I wish somebody would run away with me," said Flora, sighing; "major O'Grady, I dare say, would be a good match; for sir Horace said—Faith, Flora, it would be a famous thing for you, if the old boy would take a fancy to you now; for though he is old enough to be your grandfather, he is devilish rich, and not very good looking; but that does not signify; the rent-roll, not the face, is to be admired and approved."

Lady Ogle sat for some moments, the very image of disappointment, leaning her cheek on her hand, and beating the carpet

with her foot. At length she said—"It is of no use to despond; patience and perseverance effect wonders. We must entirely alter our plans, Flora; you must lose your spirits and your appetite."

"I never heard any thing so cruel and disagreeable," replied Miss Ogle. "If sir Horace is only to be gained by my starving myself, and growing dull and melancholy, I am sure it is a hopeless business; for I can never undertake to win him by such unpleasant means."

"You talk like an idiot," resumed her ladyship; "I only wish you not to eat before sir Horace; I have no wish or intention that you should starve yourself in reality, or that you should be low spirited, except in the presence of lady Clare and her son, whom I shall do my best to persuade——"

"That I am seriously and deeply in love. Well, mamma, it seems a good scheme enough, and I will do my best to make it succeed; and I shall only have to think of Mrs. Blisset's insolence, and how much my wardrobe wants recruiting, and these dismal recollections will, I am cer-

tain, make me grave enough : I am sure I cry till my eyes are red, whenever I remember Miss Ormond's bonnet and elegant feathers, and my own shabby one."

"It is folly to grieve about things for which we have at present no remedy," returned her ladyship: "observe my instructions, and you will have bonnets, and feathers, and every thing else, at your command."

"Depend upon it, mamma, I will not neglect my part; but, after all, I fear sir Horace will never make me his wife."

"So rich a prize," said lady Ogle, "must not be relinquished, till every effort has been made to secure it. Only consider, child—an ancient title, and large estates, at home and abroad, are worth trying for."

And the trial was made; Miss Ogle had commenced the part assigned by her manoeuvring mother, of sentimental and thoughtful, when she met, as we before related, the baroness Wandesford, and unwillingly renewed her acquaintance with Miss Lambart, whose beauty and wealth, she feared, would render her a formidable rival, should sir Horace Clare's aversion to

matrimony be only affected, which she believed probable enough.

Sir Horace Clare, under an appearance of thoughtless gaiety, possessed strong sense, discriminating taste, and depth of thought; he was feelingly alive to beauty and excellence, though he laughed with and at the ludicrous, and seemed to devote himself to the sea, where lessons of courage and hardihood are often acquired, at the expence of tenderness and politeness; but this was not the case with sir Horace: he pitied the situation of Flora Ogle, because he knew, however foreign to her own inclination, she must obey the commands of her mother; she must be deceitful, and try every artifice to procure a wealthy husband, or remain all her days in a state but little removed from absolute poverty. The very first day of their visit to his mother, sir Horace saw through the designs of lady Ogle, and regulated his conduct to her daughter in a way so unequivocal, that it was impossible she should mistake him, or encourage a belief that he meant any thing beyond politeness to his mother's guest. Flora Ogle was a pretty brunette,

This would have been a most irksome task at any other season of the year; but fortunately for her, the earl had departed this life when her friends were absent, and her house in Dublin wanted some necessary repairs and embellishments, which causes induced her to affect compliance with the wishes of Miss Lambart, who, anxious to return to the protection of the baroness Wandesford, proposed their taking a tour to the county of Kerry, where, on the border of the celebrated Lough Lean, lady Charleville had extensive possessions, and an ancient seat, at which the baroness Wandesford had been for sometime staying.

Assuming indifference as to whither she went, the dowager gave orders for their departure, to the great joy of Miss Lambart, who became every day more convinced; that if the countess dowager had no actual vices, neither had she any virtues, but merely negative ones; her charity was not the pure impulse of feeling and humanity, but of cold ostentation; and her religion the mere performance of ceremonies, and the repeating of prescribed words. How she longed to exchange the

society of this woman of the world, for that of the truly amiable baroness Wandesford, who, without display or parade, relieved the necessitous and unfortunate, and whose religion taught her to be severe in the condemnation of her own failings, and to be merciful and forgiving to the errors and transgressions of her fellow-creatures.

Had the countess dowager of Vandeleur really meditated, or intended to seclude herself from society, she could not have chosen a worse spot for retirement than the vicinity of the Lakes of Killarney, so justly famous for their sublimity and beauty, and at that particular season the fashionable resort of the gay, the rich, and the idle, attractive alike to the contemplative philosopher, and the enthusiastic artist. But in fact, the dowager countess had no desire for privacy and retirement; she neither lamented, nor pretended to lament, the death of her lord; her chief, and indeed, only cause for regret, arose from her son's *mésalliance*, and the will made by the deceased earl, which prevented his setting aside this most degrading and im-

prudent marriage, and the consequent disappointment of her long and ardently-cherished scheme, of uniting the Vandeleur and Lambart estates. When these hateful remembrances crossed the brain of the dowager, they had the disagreeable effect of discomposing her temper, and rendering her peevish and dissatisfied, to the extreme annoyance of Mrs. Blandy, who had to bear solely and undivided her ill-humour; for to lady Charleville, the baroness Wandesford, and her other friends, she always appeared easy and affable, the impress of taste and elegance, even in widow's weeds, ever *recherché* in her dress and manners, *la divinité du mode*.

Safe in the protection of the worthy and venerable baroness of Wandesford, Miss Lambart's mind gradually threw off the gloom and terror that had oppressed it, and prevented the exercise of its fine powers, and the talents with which she was eminently gifted. The salubrious air from the lakes revived her languid spirits; and her health became so much improved, that she yielded to the persuasions of her

friends, but more particularly to the wishes and advice of the baroness, and no longer declined joining the parties formed to explore the wonders and curiosities with which the lakes, mountains, and rocks, abounded. The dowager countess always made one in these parties; not that she derived the least pleasure or entertainment from such excursions, for she had no sort of delight in sailing over the enchanting lakes, or in visiting the islands, mountains, and cascades; the dowager, unhappily, had no taste for nature, however lovely, varied, or fantastic; a crowded assembly, a rout, where she was the presiding goddess, admired and worshipped, Etruscan lamps, perfumed wax-lights, and rooms hung with gold tissue, and festooned with artificial roses, gave infinitely more pleasure to her eyes, than waters intersected with islands, or mountains that lifted their aspiring heads to the clouds; but it was fashionable to visit, and speak in raptures of the lakes of Lough Lean; and the dowager, while actually detesting the sight of a boat, and sick to death of exploring rocks and mountains, would disclaim all weariness, and

echo the rapturous admiration and astonishment of others, while she was neither interested nor affected by the magnificent spectacle presented in the wide expanse of waters, dotted with little emerald islands, or charmed with the picturesque views that rewarded the toil of climbing the rugged rocks and steep mountains.

But not thus coldly did Miss Lambert regard the grandeur and beauty of her native Ireland; to her young and unsophisticated mind, the diamond waters of Lough Lean, whether burnished by the golden rays of the sun, or reflecting the softened light of the moon, presented objects of awe, delight, and admiration. The beetling rocks, with here and there a scanty spot of verdure, or a solitary tree, with bare and gnarled roots, inserted between huge masses of stone, the high mountains and groves of ancient trees, impressed her enthusiastic mind with a just sense of the superiority of nature over the most elaborate works of art. Miss Lambert did not stand near O'Sullivan's Cascade, and listen with apathy to the astounding thunder of its magnificent fall; she did not climb the

stupendous mountains, and gaze unmoved on the grand blue arch of heaven, stretched over objects of unrivalled beauty, romantic, pastoral, and sublime; thoughts of the goodness, wisdom, and power of the Creator, filled her eyes with tears, and thrilled her pure heart with feelings of awe and devotion. The scenery of the lakes appeared to her like enchantment, and her eye wandered unwearied over the unclouded sky, the green earth, and the sparkling waters, and beheld in each a glory, a wonder, and a charm; for she viewed them with the fresh unvitiated spirit of youth, with a heart where no evil or tumultuous passions blunted or effaced the pure taste implanted by nature, with perceptions clear, aided by the unerring light of truth.

Never, except at Lisburn Abbey, the home of her infancy, had Miss Lambart felt so happy; her mind was tranquil, and the rosy tint of health was beginning to mingle with the lily hue of her cheek. Satisfied that the attainments of the baroness Wandesford were of the first order, that her understanding had received the highest cultivation, and that her conversa-

tion was at once amusing, instructive, and polished, Ada had felt neither want of, nor wish for, other companion or friend; yet she received the embrace of lady Stella Egerton with gladness, and acknowledged that her presence was an addition to her happiness; and that sir Philip Egerton was entitled to her gratitude, for complying with his wife's request to renew their friendship at the Lakes of Killarney.

On the delightful promonory of Mucruss, sir Philip Egerton engaged a cottage *ornée*, the casements of which commanded an extensive view of the lakes, and their romantic shores diversified with groves, mountains, rocks, and villas; and at that cottage Miss Lambart passed many of the pleasantest hours of her life, in the society of lady Stella, between whom and herself subsisted a perfect friendship, and to whom she confided her utter dislike of her cousin, the earl of Vandeleur, the persecution she had suffered from him, and her terrific adventure with the vindictive Italian Ianthe, who, in the frenzy of jealousy, had mistaken her for Miss Obrien, of whose marriage with lord Conway she

had gained a knowledge, and whom she designed to sacrifice to her vengeance, believing she should render the life of her seducer miserable, by depriving him of a beloved bride.

“That secret marriage,” said lady Stella, “did not so much surprise me as it did many others, for I suspected that lord Conway was the incognito reciter of verses who excited so much curiosity at Doneraile Castle; and I so closely examined Miss Obrien’s character, that, in spite of appearances, she never for a moment deceived me; I could never bring myself to believe that she would put her fame and interest to hazard, and all for love. No, no; in the game she played,” continued lady Stella, “she was certain to come off a winner; for if she failed to obtain the rank her ambition strained after, she was sure to gain wealth, from the way in which she had tied his lordship down. By extraordinary good luck she possesses both; but defend me from being forced upon a man; to be acknowledged upon compulsion, would cause a coronet to press heavily on

my brow, and my tears would render dim the jewels that adorned it."

"Having obtained rank, the countess of Vandeleur can dispense with affection," observed sir Philip; "I am persuaded the noble pair have a decided aversion to each other; but this dislike will not embitter their happiness; the earl, I am convinced, will put no constraint upon his inclinations, and the countess, having no sensibility to wound, will bear his neglect with perfect indifference, satisfied that her idols, rank and wealth, can never be torn from her, except by the commission of some act of imprudence on her part, against which, the coldness of her heart, aided by cunning and pride, will effectually guard her."

"The affection of a devoted heart," replied lady Stella, looking tenderly on her husband, "is of infinitely more value than the highest rank, supported by the wealth of Croesus; and when you marry, my dear friend——"

"Me marry!" repeated Miss Lambart, blushing; "pardon the rudeness of my interruption, I am convinced I shall never be a wife."

“ Without you are certain you love, and are beloved,” resumed lady Stella; “ that is exactly what I believe; but I have the gift of prophecy, and positively affirm you will marry.”

“ And live long and happily, does not the prediction extend to that ?” asked Miss Lambart, laughing.

“ Yes, and to much more,” replied lady Stella; “ but I must defer pronouncing more upon your fate at present, for here comes my Mercury, to announce the boat being in readiness to waft us to Innis-fallen.”

As yet the young friends had not visited that island, rendered famous by the report of the superstitious peasants, who declared it to be the haunt of water sprites, who, when the wind was calm, and the moon clear, rose from the bosom of the adjacent lake, crowned with sedge and white lilies, and moved in procession to a cave, where a young shepherd had dwelt in the olden time, of whose handsome person a nymph of the lake had become so enamoured, that she had drawn him under the water, as he lay, overcome

with heat and half asleep, on the margin of the lake.

The youth had been missing from his accustomed haunts for some time, and his sheep, bleating and restless, had wandered in search of him, from one side of the island to the other, and his companions were in the utmost concern about him, when an old peasant, whom business had detained abroad to a late hour, saw the procession rise from the lake, with the lost shepherd in the midst of strange forms, some with the heads and others with the fins and tails of fishes. Though trembling in every limb, the benighted peasant found himself hurried along, till he stood opposite the cave, into which he saw the procession enter, and presently after he heard loud sounds of mirth and music. Terrified at the spectacle he had witnessed, and at the unearthly noise and revelry, the old man preyed to saint Fillen, and saint Patrick, and hastened, with his utmost speed, from the haunted spot. Having reached home, he had just time to relate the strange sight he had seen, and the noises he had heard, when he suddenly

died; but his fate did not deter others, who fancied they possessed stronger nerves, from endeavouring to prove the truth of the old man's report. Full of curiosity, they concealed themselves in the cave, and beheld sights that ever after prevented their following their former occupations, they became maniacs, and wandered about the country, singing the songs of the water sprites, and raving about mermaids, and the happiness of the young shepherd who had obtained immortality, and dwelt beneath the waters of Lough Lean, in a palace of coral, inlaid with gold and diamonds.

This legend, narrated in a rich brogue, and with all the appearance of sincere belief, by their guide, induced sir Philip Egerton and the ladies to follow him to the haunted cave, which they found had a wide arched entrance, diverging into several low damp excavations.

"I cannot approve of the taste of the water nymphs," said lady Stella, "if this is their favourite resort."

"I should greatly prefer their coral palaces," replied Miss Lambart.

"Let us return into the air; the damp and mildew of these excavations must be unwholesome," said sir Philip; "and there is nothing here to raise admiration, or excite curiosity."

"Faith then," rejoined their guide, "you had better keep your tongue quiet, and say niver a word against the cave; for they same genteels that has laid claim it for hundreds of years, think it quite nate and eligent, and perhaps will not be plased to hear it disparaged: but here is Redmund O'Neil, and it is himself that had the gift of the bard in his head before could spake; and it is Redmund that can tell your honours all about the shepherd of Innisfallen, and the water sprites."

As he spoke he drew back, and gave place to a tall strong-limbed man, whose grizzled hair told of the flight of many summers, though his firm tread, and bright spirited eyes, denoted great bodily strength and undaunted courage.

"It is yourself you mane, Larry Doran," said Redmund, proudly, "that is gifted to tell such fables better than any body else of my acquaintance; such non-

sense will sarve to intertain childer and fools altogetther, but no sensible cratures would be seen to lend their ears to such rigmarole. Plase your honours," continued Redmund, bowing, "the whole story rose from an old man, who, one night, was after draming——"

"Draming," repeated the guide; "och, then! and is it draming you are spaking about? sure now it is yourself that is in a drame, Mr. Edmund O'Niel, or you would never shew such bad manners to an old friend, as to contradict what I have heard my grandfader and my own fader tell before I was born; botheration then! I remember they used to tach me the whole story, before I could tell a parate from a pebble, and murder and the duoul, there you stand, wid your mouth full of a drame!"

"Which is asier to swallow, Larry, than your tale," returned Redmund; "for it is none but a born fool would believe——"

"Och! to be sure and that is not you then," returned the guide; "you are a schollard, and can rade and write, and must be a wise parsan altogetther, though

I have heard the songs you said that you made yourself out of your own head; and faith now, I tell you to your teeth, they are not a bit more likely to be true than this same story of the shepherd and the water sprites."

"Not true?" repeated Redmund, fiercely; "I did not come of a lying race, and by the red blood of the O'Niels, which has so often died the green sod of Erin, I have a big mind to——"

Sir Philip Egerton caught his uplifted arm, and bade him remember the presence of the ladies.

Redmund bowed, and begged pardon for his rashness, while the guide slunk away, muttering—"To the duoul, wld him and his race! och, botheration! the fellow is so consaited, that he belaves nobody's lies but his own."

"Our guide intends to desert us, I believe," said sir Philip, as he watched the retreating steps of Larry Doran.

"The loss is gist nothing at all, your honour," replied Redmund; "for sure there is no depending upon him, no how, except it is to take his own share of

mountain dew; but if it is agreeable, I shall be after taking his place; and it is great luck you have, in gitting hold of me; for there is not an inch of ground here about the larks, but I have trod over, till I could find the Divil's Punch Bowl, and the Agles' Nist that is, and the Cave of Echoes, asleep or awake—any how. Now, if your honour will gist' plase to say where you wish to go,”

“I must ask that of the ladies,” replied sir Philip; “I always follow their lead.”

Redmund smiled, looked at the ladies, and said—“Faith then, it is myself that understands the rispict a brave man feels for a beautiful female, and there is no little pleasure in that same, though it makes the heart sore, and keeps the eyes watching—och, Norah, ma' chree! but I beg pardon; my thoughts, bad luck to them! are often running away with my manners, and now they should be waiting for y'our honour's commands.”

“We wish,” said lady Stella, “to visit the Cave of Echoes, and prove whether, as in most cases, report has not exaggerated its fame.”

Redmund led the way to their boat, and after a pleasant sail on the upper lake, the ladies agreed to partake of the refreshments they had brought with them, on a spot pointed out for its particular beauty by Redmund O'Neil. It was a verdant platform, formed by the excelling hand of nature, on the side of one of those mountains that overlook the fairy islands of the lake; a bank, covered with violets and wild thyme, served them for a seat, and a tree, that seemed coeval with the lake, spread its branches over them, forming a leafy canopy that defended them from the heat and glare of the sun; while their bower was rendered delightfully cool by a cascade, that, falling down the mountain, at a few yards distance, gave its clear water to the lake.

“ I should like to build a cottage on this charming spot,” said Miss Lambart, viewing with enraptured eyes the prospect round her: “ nothing can be more picturesque than these mountains, or more beautiful than the appearance of these vast sheets of water, dimpling and sparkling in the sunbeams; and the islands seen from

mountain dew; but if it is agreeable, I shall be after taking his place; and it is great luck you have, in gitting hold of me; for there is not an inch of ground here about the laks, but I have trod over, till I could find the Divil's Punch Bowl, and the Agles' Nist that is, and the Cave of Echoes, asleep or awake—any how. Now, if y^{our} honour will gist plase to say where you wish to go."

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this distance appear so fresh and verdant, they seem to realize all we have ever read of fairy land."

"During the summer months," replied lady Stella, "I should have no objection to have my residence near the lakes, for then they present scenes of inviting beauty; but in winter, when storms of sleet, snow and wind, are let loose, to ravage, destroy, and deform, I should rather be living in a populous city: I can picture to myself nothing more wild and appalling than Lough Lean, swollen, and covering, with its foaming and agitated waters, the deserted shore, where all is dreary and desolate, and the trees stripped of their foliage, clash their naked branches, and groan in sympathy with the howling tempest."

"You have drawn a most fearful winter picture of Lough Lean, and no doubt a correct one," replied Miss Lambart; "but in spite of wind, overflowing water, and icicles, I should not have the smallest objection to pass a winter here, for I admire nature in all her changes and seasons, and particularly like to contemplate her

when divested of her green robes and flowery garlands."

"And if you were to pass a winter here," said lady Stella, "you might obtain the title of Lady of the Lake—what an enviable *cognomen*!"

"And in addition to this distinction," rejoined sir Philip, "you might be considered by the ignorant peasants a fairy."

"So they did not attribute evil to me," replied Miss Lambart, "an opinion of that sort would never trouble me. But is it not time we should seek the Cave of Echoes?"

Sir Philip beckoned to Redmund, who carried a Spanish guitar, a flute, and a portfolio; and though "*declining in the vale of years*," he led the way up a steep and rugged rock, on the top of which was the Eagle's Nest, or Cave of Echoes, with all the spirit and activity of youth.

It would only be waste of time to attempt describing a spot that has so frequently employed the pen of the tourist, and the pencil of the artist; suffice it to say, that the exterior of the Eagle's Nest was thickly

matted with shamrock, honeysuckles, convolvulus, and other creeping plants, that communicated their delicious perfume to the interior, which was of circular form, dry, and capacious : the echo was indeed wonderful, and far exceeded the expectation of its present visitors, who remembering that their guide, who boasted himself a real descendant from the first king of Ireland, was a bard, they requested him to sing, that they might have the pleasure of hearing the echo repeat a native lay.

Redmund O'Niel was not troubled with bashfulness, and did not require much entreaty ; he merely promised, that it was bad altogether to sing wid a dry throat, and it was not himself sure that could be after gitting out an eligent thune, while his mouth wanted washing, from dust and heat, that was gist choking him. Having allayed the thirst of which he complained, Redmund sang, with a strong and mellow voice, a composition of his own.

“ Come wid me, Mona, my dear,
To the lake so smooth and clear;
Honour calls, I must obey,
Though I could for ever stay
Wid thee, my heart's true love.

" By the moon that gilds the night,
By the stars that shine so bright,
Though I'm call'd to foreign shore,
I'll return when war is o'er,

And thou my bride shall be.

" Connor fought, and bravely too,
This his mourning comrades knew;
Ne'er to foe-man would he yield,
Yet he died on battle field,

Far from his love and home.

" Must the soldier's corse remain,
Pale and bloody on the plain?
Shall the prowling wolf be there,
Vultures foul his heartstrings tear?

That thrill'd with hope and love.

" No, his comrades dig his grave—
Earth receives the young and brave;
Field, on which he fought and bled,
Thou shalt pillow soft his head,

Who sleeps a dreamless sleep.

" When at home his comrades tell
How brave Connor fought and fell.
With shrieking, Mona flew,
Where she heard his last adieu,

Beside thy waves, Lough-Sean.

" Connor, love, in death I'm thine,
My spirit shall thy spirit join;
Lake, be thou my bridal bed—
Waters, close above my head—

Poor Mona seeks her love.

" Lake Lough-Sean, this mournful tale
In thy islands shall prevail;
Echo in her secret cave,
Shall bewail the fair and brave,

With sadly-swelling note."

And écho did repeat the note, in a variety of cadences, till, plaintive and low, it died away.

Redmund received his due meed of praise, as author, composer, and singer; and Miss Lambart, dropping into the full goblet, poured out by lady Stella, a small gold medal, on which was engraved a harp, encircled with shamrock, gracefully presented it to Redmund, with a compliment to his genius, and thanks for the pleasure he had afforded them.

The old man's eyes sparkled with pride and pleasure; it was but seldom he touched gold; yet it was not its value, but the idea that it was the meed of talent, that gratified him. Gratefully thanking the beautiful donor, he begged to be permitted to kiss her hand, a favour she modestly granted.

Redmund placed the medal in his breast, saying, proudly—"It was thus in the halls of my fathers—the white hand of beauty rewarded the song of the bard; and I, sure the last and poorest of my race, have received honour, which shall warm my heart and inspire many a strain of green Erin."

Sir Philip Egerton now placed the guitar before Miss Lambart, and requested she would invoke Echo.

"Or provoke her," replied Miss Lambart; "for it is long since I attempted to sing, and I fear I shall make only discord."

"Of that suffer us to be the judges," said lady Stella.

Miss Lambart struck a few notes, and in a voice plaintive and sweet, gave the following canzonet:—

"Let, my lute, thy numbers flow,
Like dew-drops rose-buds greeting;
Hark, in notes as soft and low,
Echo thy strains repeating.

"Still viewless, yet for ever near,
Dost thou hide in yonder fountain?
Soft, my lute, her voice I hear,
Sweet Echo of the mountain.

"This is Echo's favourite seat,
Near where circling waves are dancing;
Here she dwells in green retreat,
To watch the yellow moonbeams glancing."

The melodious repetitions of the nymph of the cave rendered Miss Lambart's singing more than ever delightful, who, to get rid of compliments and praise, which oppressed her modesty, proposed to lady Stella sketching a view from the rock,

from whence the broad-spreading Lough Lean, and its beautiful emerald islets, were seen to much advantage. Quitting the cave, the fair friends seated themselves beneath the rich-scented honeysuckles, and placing their drawing-materials before them, began to exercise their pencils in delineating the sublime and majestic scenery with which they were surrounded.

Sir Philip had just commenced reading a new poem, when Redmund, starting from a slumber in which he had been indulging, at the mouth of the cave, looked round him anxiously, when seeing the ladies sitting at a little distance, quietly employed, he exclaimed—"Musha botheration! surely then it was nothing at all, and I was only gist draming about it."

Again he was laying his head on the moss-covered stone, that had served him for a pillow, when sir Philip Egerton asked—"Of what were you dreaming O'Niel?"

"The dreams of a gifted man like you must be worth hearing," said lady Stella.

"Not a bit of it then, my lady," replied Redmund; "but if you ask me, sure then I was draming that I heard a cry of mur-

ther; and whist now, faith, and I believe it was no drame altogether; for by the cross of St. Patrick, I hear an outcry not much the odds of it."

The ladies threw down their pencils, and listened in alarm. Sir Philip, after a moment's pause, said—"I certainly hear voices below the rock."

"Sure and I hear Pat Dorgan and Róry Phipps, our boatmen. Och, sure then the spalpeens are not going to lave the ladies here upon the blake rock all night, and clane row away from us."

"We must prevent that; follow me, O'Niel," said sir Philip; and they instantly began descending the rock.

"Well, really we are in a most romantic situation; left here alone on a cloud-capp'd hill—rock I mean," said lady Stella; "and though the cave is reported to have afforded shelter to a saint, and to have been his residence for fifty years, as I am a sinner, I have no inclination to remain in it a single night."

"Nor I, even with you for my companion," replied Miss Lambert; "for not even your charming spirits would chase

the alarm I should feel at being abroad after sunset; my late terrible adventure has made me a coward, and I——”

“Hark!” interrupted lady Stella; “I hear sir Philip’s voice; he speaks loud, and seems expostulating. Have you courage to attempt descending the rock without other assistance than mine?”

“I have courage enough to attempt leaving this wild spot,” said Miss Lambart, hastily closing her portfolio; “let us instantly be gone.”

With cautious steps the fair friends began their dangerous descent. Having reached a ledge of the rock that offered safe footing, they stopped to take breath, and survey the precipitous path they had still to encounter. Fear and impatience urged them to proceed, and they again pursued their dangerous way, till, from a bend of the rock, they beheld a man stretched on the sands, apparently lifeless, near whom, sir Philip Egerton, a strange gentleman, Redmund O’Niel, and the boatmen, were standing.

“Gracious Providence!” exclaimed Miss

Lambart, "some dreadful accident has happened!"

"Which has, I fear, occasioned death," replied lady Stella.

"Let us hope better," said Miss Lambart; "it may only be a suspension of sense."

"If so," resumed lady Stella, "my volatile salts might be useful. Dear Ada, how pale you look! Be careful how you place your foot. How thankful I am sir Philip sees us, and is coming with O'Niel to our assistance."

Sir Philip Egerton informed the ladies, that having climbed a rock, to take a sketch of the Eagle's Nest, a stone had given way, beneath the foot of the gentleman who lay on the sands; and that in falling from a great height, he had broken his right arm, and sprained and much lacerated one of his legs.—"But he is not dead," said sir Philip; "he has merely fainted from excessive pain."

This intelligence in some measure relieved the alarm of the ladies; they hastened forward, to render what assistance

lay in their power, and had soon the satisfaction to see the stranger open his eyes, as Miss Lambart held the volatile salts to his nose, and lady Stella bathed his temples and his hands with some pure water, brought by Redmund from a little cascade that fell down the side of the rock from which the unfortunate gentleman had fallen.

In a short time his senses were restored—and with a faint smile he apologized for the trouble he was giving, and expressed his gratitude to the ladies for their amiable concern and assistance.

In the mean time, his friend had announced himself to sir Philip Egerton as colonel Wingfield, and his wounded friend as Mr. Dorrington, nephew to the earl of Woodville.

With some difficulty, owing to the awkwardness of the boatmen, Mr. Dorrington was safely conveyed to his lodgings at the Grove Cottage, pleasantly situated near the base of the Mangerton Mountain; and surgical assistance being immediately sent for, sir Philip remained with the strangers, to ascertain the nature and extent of the

injury the young man had sustained, and the opinion pronounced on his arm and leg, both being much swollen and inflamed.

The ladies pursued their way homeward, greatly interested by the appearance, and affected by the situation of Mr. Dorrington, who bore his sufferings with uncomplaining patience and fortitude.

Lady Stella spoke of the fine person and gentlemanly manner of colonel Wingfield in just commendation; but Miss Lambert's attention had been entirely engaged by his disabled friend, whose countenance, though pale and expressive of agony, was, she thought, the handsomest she had ever seen; the deep grey of his fine-formed eyes, shaded by long dark lashes, the rich clustering hair, that hung on his marble forehead, with the Grecian mould of his head, had impressed on her memory an image never to be forgotten; but the extreme delicacy of her mind prevented her expressing an opinion of his person; she thought the sufferings of the young gentleman ought alone to occupy her attention, and that to have suffered her eyes to examine his features, betrayed a want of

proper feeling and humanity; and she said, what was actually true, that she did not think she should know colonel Wingfield again, if she was to meet him, the terrible situation of his friend had so alarmed her.

The return of sir Philip was delayed till after the carriage came for Miss Lambart, who bade lady Stella good night, with such uneasy sensations, and with so anxious a wish to learn the state of Mr. Dorrington, that while relating, on her return home, the accident that had befallen him, she fainted, and was obliged to retire to bed, where she remained the whole of the following day, in a state of nervous irritability, which the baroness Wandesford attributed to the recollection of her own recent sufferings, and almost miraculous escape from death.

The presence of lady Stella Egerton proved of much more efficacy than the medicines prescribed by her physician, for she brought the pleasing and renovating intelligence that Mr. Dorrington was doing well, and was not likely to suffer more than temporary pain and confinement from

his accident ; that he had made many and particular inquiries after the ladies, to whose care and humanity he was so much obliged ; and expressed the hope, that before long he should be able to offer them his grateful thanks in person.

From this time Miss Lambart's health improved. She heard daily that Mr. Dorrington was going on well ; he had luckily escaped fever, and a naturally fine constitution, with temperate habits, and a patient and good temper, promised to release him from confinement, much sooner than was usual in similar cases.

During sir Philip Egerton's visits to the young stranger, he learned that he was an Englishman of high and ancient family, the only child of a widowed mother, and the heir to splendid estates ; that his uncle, the earl of Woodville, had also an only child, a daughter, whom he was desirous should marry his nephew, Lionel Dorrington ; but the cousins, though extremely friendly, were by no means inclined to fall in love with each other. In projecting matrimonial alliances, it seldom happens that parents and children hold the

same opinions; the former are solely influenced by interested motives, while the latter are apt to think love an ingredient necessary to happiness. Lady Mary Dorrington regarded her cousin Lionel as a brother, but she had chosen colonel Wingfield for her husband; he was the approved and beloved of her heart; and with a candour that did honour to her principles, she had made her cousin the confidant of her attachment, and determination to bestow her fair hand, and fifty thousand pounds, a fortune at her own disposal, on the gallant soldier, as soon as she was of age, to which she wanted something less than a year. And what was this piece of family history to Miss Lambart, that she should feel her cheeks glow and her heart palpitate, as she heard that his beautiful and accomplished relation had failed to inspire the bosom of Mr. Dorrington with sentiments warmer than friendship and esteem, and that he had declared his absolute resolve to remain single, till he met a female of similar tastes with his own—one who would prefer the company of her husband, and the society of virtuous sensible friends,

in elegant retirement, to all the parade and frivolous amusements of fashionable life. Alas, poor Ada! all she heard of the principles, temper, and tastes of Lionel Dorrington, only served to add grace and beauty to the portrait she unconsciously inshrined in her heart: most constantly and fervently did she put up prayers for his recovery—most anxiously look forward to the time when he should be able to quit his bedchamber, and receive the visit sir Philip Egerton had promised lady Stella and herself should pay him. But this pleasure, so ardently wished, Miss Lambert was not fated to enjoy; for the restless spirit of the dowager countess of Vandeleur had become weary of the sublime lakes of Killarney; and remembering that lord Neagle was now a rich man, and had expressed much admiration of Miss Lambert, the project of uniting them took possession of her brain; she knew her son and lord Neagle had never been very warm friends, and she determined, if possible, to revenge Alfred's *mésalliance*, and disappoint any hope he might entertain of the future, by promoting, by every means

in her power, a marriage between lord Neagle and Miss Lambart, and chiefly because she was certain her son disliked the well-regulated temper and prudent habits of his lordship, and wished to keep Miss Lambart unmarried.

The watchful affection of the baroness Wandesford had observed a change in the spirits of her beloved Ada: she frequently detected a smothered sigh, and felt alarmed at the fluctuating bloom of her cheek. It was her intention to propose a change of scene; and she was easily persuaded to quit Lough Lean, the air of which she believed did not agree with the delicate state of Miss Lambart's health: the wily dowager eagerly seized on this idea, and proposed their going to Antrim, pretending she was desirous to see an estate lord Ponsonby had said was on sale, and which a friend of hers had a wish to purchase.

The unsuspecting baroness was completely deceived by this plausible tale; she had no idea that the dowager was scheming to meet lord Neagle, who was there, staying with a friend, for the purpose of making excursions to the places worthy of note

in the county of Antrim. The dowager had no acquaintance with the family where lord Neagle was staying; but this did not discourage her; there was no doubt of their meeting, and nothing was more likely to happen, than an attachment between persons of such congenial minds as Miss Lambart and his lordship.

The dowager countess of Vandeleur had always been fond of match-making, and she now felt the excitement stronger than ever, for she had revenge to gratify. To Miss Lambart she spoke of the petrifying waters of Lough Neagh and of the stupendous pillars of the Giant's Causeway, and was disappointed to find her descriptions were listened to with indifference; in fact, Miss Lambart's thoughts had not been given to the wonders of the county of Antrim—they were wandering to the Grove Cottage, and the more interesting invalid, Lionel Dorrington. But determined not to suffer her plans to be defeated by trifling obstacles, the artful dowager alarmed the apprehensions of the baroness, by continually speaking of Ada's altered appearance, her loss of appetite,

~~and~~ languid spirits, till the venerable and amiable lady conceived it to be her duty to remove the beloved child as speedily as possible from Lough Lean, believing the air too keen for the delicate flower, which she was persuaded by the dowager looked every day less blooming.

Miss Lambert had indeed become more silent than usual, for her memory was continually picturing the expressive eyes and glossy raven curls that clustered on the lofty polished forehead of Lionel Dorrington; she sighed heavily and frequently at the recollection of his sufferings, and at the certainty that when able to travel he would depart for England; and a still deeper and more regretful sigh followed the probability that she should never see him more. Ada wondered at her own sorrowful feelings, for she was artless and inexperienced, and too innocent even to suspect that her heart was agitated by love; she had read and heard of first impressions, but it was only when the dowager named the day for their removal from Lough Lean, that the anguish she felt at the idea of departing without seeing Mr. Dorrington-

ton, without expressing to him her wishes for his perfect recovery, made her sensible that he had inspired love, her first, and, she believed, eternal love: but confusion and regret did not deprive the youthful Ada of prudence and self-control; she remembered Mr. Dorrington and herself were of different countries, strangers to each other; and though he had declared his heart at that time free from tender impressions, it was not likely it would long remain disengaged; the females of England were celebrated for their beauty, and doubtless he would select a bride from his own fair countrywomen, with whom he would live beloved, loving, and happy.—“And I,” said Ada, wiping away the tears that gushed from her eyes, “I must teach myself the hard lesson to forget, having nothing to hope; I must struggle against a weakness that I blush to acknowledge, even to myself—a weakness that all the world would condemn, and most of all my revered mistress, who, while she pitied, would assuredly despise the folly of a heart that yielded itself to unsolicited love.”

Full of the virtuous and wise resolve to

~~obliterate~~ every record of her imprudent passion for Lionel Dorrington, she destroyed a miniature of him she had painted from memory.—“ It is certainly a likeness,” said she; “ the beautiful eyes, the rich curls, and the mouth, with its sweet smile ! But go, I will not retain this resemblance, to keep alive the memory of him I shall meet no more, of him that prudence and delicacy bid me forget.”

The heart of Miss Lambart was painfully tried when she took leave of her friends, sir Philip and lady Stella Egerton, for with them she found colonel Wingfield ; and it was not without difficulty she commanded composure sufficient to leave with him her wishes for the perfect recovery of his friend. But hers was the triumph of modesty and propriety ; for she bade her friends farewell, without betraying the anguish of her feelings, or giving them reason to suspect the state of her heart.

Miss Lambart was aware that she had always been regarded by the baroness Wandesford with the tenderest solicitude, and fearful of giving her alarm and uneasiness, she strove to appear cheerful, and

take interest in the various natural curiosities with which the county of Antrim abounds; but while a smile was on her lip, her bosom felt all the misery of secret and hopeless passion.

The dowager countess of Vandeleur had expected to find lord Neagle at Antrim, but, to her extreme disappointment, she learned that he was absent with a bridal party at Carrickfergus; but as Miss Lambert's health was to be considered the grand influencer of all their movements, short rides and walks were taken daily: they had visited the celebrated lake of Lough Neagh, where a ragged *cicerone*, with a rich national brogue, and ludicrous gravity, narrated one of the many legends attached to the petrifying qualities of the lake.

"Sure then," said Grady Bagwell, "it was my own grandmoder's great grandfader as saw wid his own eyes, they two twins go down to wash in the lough, and did not they but gist dip their feet into the water, to feel whether or not it was warmer in the morning than it was at night, and all in a moment did not their ten toes turn to hard stone? By saint

Patriek, they did that same; and the two ~~twins~~ went stones to their graves."

"This is a most marvellous story indeed, my friend," observed the dowager countess.

"Och sure, and nobody will be after denying that," said Grady; "but then it is nothing at all at all to what my grand-moder used to tell happened in her young days, when boats sailing on Lough Neagh were turned into stone altogether, and the men that rowed them, and the oars in their hands, gist one and the other; well then, it was an awful sight to see that same: but after the good fader Mulligan, who deserved to be made a saint by his holiness the pope, any how—after the good fader Mulligan had prayed on his bare knees, by the side of the lough, to saint Patriek and saint Dennis, the waters never harmed Christian people any more; though, bad manners to their ugly ways! they still shew what they could do, if they durst, in the old way of transmogrifying."

Miss Lambart found much amusement in listening to Grady Bagwell's miraculous hyperboles, which she rewarded by purchasing from him some trifling petrifications.

An affected indisposition of which the dowager complained, together with a heavy fall of rain, confined herself and travelling companions to the house near a fortnight, a dull and most distressing period to Miss Lambart, whose thoughts, deprived of other subjects to employ and entertain them, returned to the sad but delightful remembrance of Lionel Dorrington; most anxiously did she wish to hear from lady Stella Egerton, that she might learn the state of his health, and whether he had made any inquiries after her, or expressed disappointment at not receiving her promised visit.

Love has ever been found an ingenious and subtle tormentor. Miss Lambart had latterly taken more exercise than usual, and it had acted on her delicate frame like a gentle opiate; she had enjoyed tranquil and refreshing sleep, and she fancied her imprudent passion subdued; but her impatience to hear from her friend, lady Stella Egerton, and her anxiety to know whether she was remembered by Mr. Dorrington, convinced her that he still held an unshaken ascendancy over her heart;

and that to learn he had forgotten, or spoken of her with indifference, would deeply wound her pride, and add misery to the painful certainty that they were separated to meet no more.

But this pang she was spared—the next post brought the anxiously-expected letter from lady Stella, who assured her that Mr. Dorrington had expressed much regret, when informed that she had left Killarney before he had paid her his personal thanks.

The heart of Ada throbbed with pleasure, as she read the assurance that she was not forgotten; but the sparkle of her eye was quenched in tears, when she came to the next sentence—"Sir Philip and myself are delighted with this charming young man, and sincerely regret that colonel Wingfield's military affairs compel him to return to England, and, of course, his friend Mr. Dorrington."—"Whom may Heaven protect and bless, wherever he goes!" said Ada; "I shall never see him again, but may he be happy!"

For some time her tears prevented her reading what followed:—"Colonel Wing-

field, I suspect, is anxious to return to lady Mary Dorrington; his friend is sorry to be hurried from Ireland so suddenly; but he tells me he will visit our Emerald Isle again, for the express purpose of being introduced to Miss Lambart, to whom he owes so much gratitude, and of whose beauty, accomplishments, and amiable qualities, he has heard such high commendation."

"Oh that he may return!" said Ada; "but no, I must not, dare not hope it—a thousand circumstances may arise to prevent his present intention. In his own country he will meet friends, in whose society he will forget that Ada exists—no, no, he will never return to Ireland."

The dowager countess of Vandeleur grew tired of acting indisposition; her sole companions, the baroness Vandesford and Miss Lambart, were not calculated to remove the ennui that she laboured under. Lord Neagle was still at Carrickfergus; but the weather had cleared up, the sun shone, and the dowager thought the fresh air would brace her nerves; and she pro-

posed an excursion to the Giant's Causeway.

By Miss Lambart' this magnificent colonnade was beheld with astonishment and admiration ; and as she gazed, she repeated to herself—

—This temple, rear'd by Nature,
Proclaims her God, with mute eloquence speaks
To the unbeliever's heart, awakens
In its dark recesses feelings of awe,
Reverence, and admiration. Here
Let the atheist pause ; and while his eye
Measures the beautiful symmetry of
These lofty pillars, over which ages
Have pass'd, and time's destructive wing has swept,
Uninjur'd, let him confess that chance
Could not rear structure so magnificent,
So grand, stupendous, and sublime ; here
His proud heart humbled, let him repentant,
Renounce the fallacies that have deluded
And misled his reason : let him believe,
And own the power of his Creator ;
Prostrate in the dust, adore and worship,
Acknowledging the existence, wisdom,
And majesty of Him, who out of chaos
Called the universe, with all the glories,
Wonders, and beauties it contains.

Miss Lambart seated herself to make a drawing of this grand architecture of nature ; and so absorbing grew her subject, that she became silent. Not wishing to interrupt an employment in which she

seemed so deeply interested, the baroness took the offered arm of the dowager countess, who led her to a short distance on the seashore.—“The sun dazzles my eyes,” said the baroness; “but if I am not mistaken, that vessel moves this way.”

“It is a yacht,” replied the dowager; “no doubt some party are on an excursion of pleasure; there seems a great many persons, male and female, on deck. I protest a gentleman bows to us—I hope it may prove an acquaintance we can with propriety acknowledge.”

“For Miss Lambert’s sake,” said the baroness, “I am happy to perceive they steer this way, and I hope the ladies are characters we can associate with, for the poor child has but a dull life of it, with only ourselves for companions, we who are so far advanced beyond her own age.”

This observation did not at all please the dowager, but she did not choose to appear offended. The baroness of Wandesford was certainly an old woman, avowedly so; but for herself, she had but just attained a certain age, possessed a fine person, and

had been complimented on her fascinating manners, and her superior understanding, till she was persuaded, though not quite as young as Ada, who was little more than a child, she was herself a companion endowed with attractions sufficiently brilliant to render other society of no consequence, farther than serving as a foil to shew off her own wit and elegance to more advantage, or to assist her schemes of aggrandizement.

While the dowager was endeavouring to swallow the offensive remark on her age, her venerable friend was watching the progress of the yacht, which as it neared the shore, she perceived had three ladies seated on the deck.—“ I could very well have dispensed with their company,” said the dowager, who had recognised the honourable Mrs. Carleton and Miss Belmont; “ but as I see lord Neagle is one of the party, for his sake I shall be civil to the rest.”

This resolution had not been many minutes taken, when the gentlemen assisted the ladies on shore. Lord Neagle introduced his friend, sir Horace Clare, and the

honourable Mr. Carleton; and the baroness, taking the hand of Miss Ogle, presented her to the dowager, whose stately manner would have disconcerted many; but the young lady, like her brother sir Harry, had too good an opinion of herself to be mortified at a reception that was coldly polite. The baroness of Wandesford seemed gratified, and expressed her pleasure at making the acquaintance of sir Horace Clare, from remembrance of the friendship that had formerly subsisted between his grandmother and herself; nor was the dowager less gracious in her reception of him, because she was certain he was a man of family, and possessed estates in Scotland and Ireland, that produced an income sufficient to render him of consequence even in her eyes.

The ladies made earnest and kind inquiries after Miss Lambart; the dowager, who saw the policy of putting on the affable, immediately led the way to the spot where Ada sat, still employed with her pencil. Much congratulation took place; Miss Belmont and Miss Lambart were sincerely pleased at again meeting

each other ; while Miss Ogle, who talked much of the prodigious happiness she enjoyed in meeting dear Miss Lambart so unexpectedly, was the only person who regretted the chance that had brought them together.

At the suggestion of Mr. Carleton, provisions were brought from the yacht, and added to the repast the servants of the baroness were spreading ; and the joyous party, seated amid the pillars of the Giant's Causeway, partook of refreshment, to which the healthful sea-breeze gave appetite, while cheerfulness and good humour bestowed zest the most delicious. Yet among this seemingly happy group, there certainly sat two persons who were far from feeling the enjoyment their smiles expressed ; the dowager countess was dissatisfied with the conduct of lord Neagle, whose attention to Miss Belmont made her repent her journey to Antrim ; for it was evident to her that his lordship's sentiments had undergone a change, and that Miss Belmont had superseded Miss Lambart in his regard. This was a mortifying disappointment, and was only softened by

but she was not to his taste; her want of fortune would, with him, have been no objection; but she had been brought up under the eye of an artful, scheming mother, and, like that mother, was all deception, selfish, and unprincipled; and therefore it was impossible she should touch his heart, except with compassion, or raise any other wishes than for an amendment of her principles and her circumstances.

While sitting under the basaltic pillars of the Giant's Causeway, sir Horace Clare thought Miss Lambart the most lovely and elegant female he had ever seen; there was grace in every attitude, and beauty in every movement: in his eyes, her face and form were the perfection of female loveliness; and his heart felt that one smile—one approving look of hers, would bind it in captivity for ever.

Miss Lambart blushed when she encountered the gaze of sir Horace, and the modest suffusion heightened her beauty.

Miss Ogle, watching the direction of his eyes, became envious and jealous; for she saw that the charms of Miss Lambart had, in one short hour, made an impression

on a heart, which had for weeks remained invulnerable to all her allurements and attractions. At table he used to be attentive, but now he appeared to forget her entirely: her pride was mortified, and she tried to engage his notice, by speaking of the swiftness of his yacht, which he had named the *Sea Nymph*. This was indeed a favourite theme; but a new object engrossed the thoughts of sir Horace, and he remained silent; while lord Neagle and Mr. Carleton echoed Miss Ogle's commendation of the elegant construction, accommodations, and speed of the *Sea Nymph*, then anchored within a cable's length of the shore.

The sublime expanse of the blue unruffled ocean, on which sails, approaching from the distant horizon, appeared like hovering white-winged gulls, and the majestic range of pillars, extending along the shore, as far as the eye could reach, had so often and so successfully employed the pencil of the artist, that it was with unaffected reluctance Miss Lambart was prevailed upon to produce the sketch she had taken. Gallantry and politeness would have com-

pelled the praise of the gentlemen, had the attempted delineation been ever so indifferent; but this was not the case—Miss Lambert's pencil was guided by genius and directed by taste:—the sketch was true to nature, and it obtained the admiration it deserved, particularly from sir Horace Clare, who viewed it with the correct eye of an artist, and having pointed out its excelling points, declared, when finished, it would be a gem worthy the cabinet of a prince.

Miss Ogle possessed very few accomplishments; she could neither paint nor draw, and she saw the castle her mother had been building melt into air; she was convinced—painfully convinced, that the hand and fortune of sir Horace Clare were not destined for her; a younger and a fairer one had stepped between her and her hopes, and she was ready to exclaim, with the elfin page, "*Lost, lost, lost!*"

The honourable Mr. Carleton, who, though he greatly admired, was, in reality, no connoisseur in drawing or painting, had been busily tracing, with his penknife, letters on a large tempting apple, while

sir Horace Clare was pointing out the very correct perspective, in Miss Lambart's sketch. Having completed his work, Mr. Carleton presented the apple to Miss Lambart, who, with a deep blush, read the inscription "*For the fairest,*" cut in the rind.

"No one," said Mr. Carleton, bowing with an air of gallantry, and glancing towards sir Horace, "will deny me the credit of being perfectly correct in my appropriation."

"Assuredly not," replied sir Horace, who had read the inscription.

But Miss Lambart, neither flattered nor pleased to be so distinguished, gracefully and modestly returned the apple to the fruit-basket, placing it opposite to Miss Belmont.

Miss Ogle tried to smile, but the frown on her brow contradicted the curve of her lip.

Lord Noel saw she was displeased, and said, "To prevent the approach of discord, I move that the apple be divided."

"It is a wise and just proposition," replied the baroness Wandesford, "and be-

ing the oldest of the party, I will take upon myself to prevent contention." She then deliberately divided the apple into six equal parts, which being handed round to the ladies, she took her share, observing, with a good-natured smile. I am a woman, and though fallen into '*the scar and yellow leaf*,' not without the vanity of my sex—unwilling to resign my claim to beauty.

"The apple we are eating," said Miss Belmont, "was gathered yesterday in the Garden of Eden, where every object seemed in perfect harmony—never did my eyes behold so delightful a spot."

"It is in truth worthy of the praise you bestow upon it," replied the honourable Mrs. Carleton.

"Where poetry and painting might delight to fix their residence," rejoined lord Neagle, "certain to find inexhaustible subjects for the exercise of their powers."

"Yes," said Miss Ogle, fixing her eyes on sir Horace Cläre, and affecting to smother a sigh; "and where Hope might gather roses, to wither on the altar of disappointment."

"As sure as fate, Miss Ogle is in love," exclaimed Mr. Carleton; "nothing but hopeless passion could possibly convert a merry girl into a grave sentimentalist: poor thing! poor thing! I pity your case; but keep up your spirits; disappointments of this sort are seldom fatal—you may find another Eden."

Miss Ogle intended to be dignified, but she had not features for it, and she only looked spiteful, as she protested she did not understand Mr. Carleton; it was time enough for her to think of love; when she spoke of disappointment, it was not in allusion to any feelings of her own, for she must say she had found Eden, as he was pleased to call it, a very charming pleasant place, and lady Clare so particularly kind and obliging.—"I am sure I shall never forget," continued she, "how extremely happy I have been, nor ever cease to regret——"

"You could not remain there all your life," interrupted Mr. Carleton. "I believe you—indeed I do, Miss Ogle."

"Fie, Mr. Carleton, how can you be so teasing!" said his lady. "Though Miss

Ogle may be sorry to leave the delightful residence of kind friends, it does not follow that she should wish to spend her life there."

"It would by no means derogate from her taste," replied Mr. Carleton, "was she to cherish such a wish; for there, as in the enchanted vale of Shadaski,

The cuddly fruits all ripe invite—
The gushing fountain yields delight,
As on its marge you rove;
Bright flowers expand, thick groves appear,
Where you may fragrant altars rear
To friendship and to love."

Miss Lambart looked the curiosity, she was too diffident to express; but the dowager countess of Vandeleur, who felt no such embarrassing restraint, immediately asked—"And where is this same land of delights—this paradise, to be found?"

"At the short distance of about four miles from this," replied sir Horace Clare, eagerly; "I am well acquainted with the spot, and all its bearings, and shall be most proud and happy if you will permit me to pilot you thither."

Miss Ogle bit her lip till it bled, as the

dowager resumed—"If the baroness Wandesford approves, and has no objection to be on the water after sunset, and thinks she will not be too much fatigued, I confess I should like to explore the beauties of this celebrated Eden."

The amiable baroness read, or fancied she read, a similar inclination in the expressive countenance of Ada; and always forgetful of her own infirmities, when they interfered with that beloved one's gratification, she promptly replied—"Among the many wonders attributed to Lough Neagh, it possesses the power of renovation, for I certainly feel unusually strong and active; so much so, that I am almost persuaded to believe I am growing young again: at any rate, I can still enjoy the moonlit sea on a fine summer evening, and am quite able and desirous to be one of the party to Eden."

The honourable Mr. Carleton looked up at the sun, and was about to make some remark, which sir Horace prevented, by placing his finger significantly on his lip; and desiring him and lord Neagle to take care of the ladies, he hurried forwards, to

make the well-understood signal for sailing to the crew on board the yacht. Presently a boat approached the shore, in which the whole party, without difficulty, or danger of accident, reached the little vessel, and were accommodated with seats on deck: the sails were spread, to catch the light breeze, and the yacht, like a creature of life, bounded over the sparkling waves. Sir Horace Clare looked to great advantage as he trod the deck of his vessel, and gave orders to her crew, fine healthy young men, who obeyed his commands with the cheerful alacrity of willing spirits. The yacht was steered, as sir Horace directed, towards Carrickfergus, till they came near to a cluster of rocks, which having doubled, they entered a narrow but deep river.—“You are no longer on salt water, ladies,” said the young commander; “this is the river Logan, the winding course of which will, in less than half an hour bring us to our destined haven.”

Miss Lambart had been so delighted with the little voyage, that she was sorry to hear it was to terminate so soon. The

venerable baroness saw the fresh bloom on Ada's cheek, and mentally rejoiced that no selfish consideration of hers had deprived her of the pleasure which the smile on her lip and the sparkle of her eye evinced. Every one felt and expressed their gratification with sincerity, except Miss Ogle, who was secretly angry and jealous, and the dowager countess of Vandeleur, who had a double cause for discontent; in the first place, she had been accustomed to undivided homage; but on board the *Sea Nymph* she was out of her sphere, and found that more attention was paid to the young ladies than herself: she also suspected there was an engagement between Miss Belmont and lord Neagle, and that her scheme of marrying Miss Lambart to his lordship would prove a failure. These thoughts had rendered her insensible to the sunny brightness of the weather, the refreshing breeze, and the beauty of the rippling water, over which the *Sea Nymph*, spreading her white pinions, flew with a grace and steadiness of motion, that seemed incredible to those unaccustomed to travel the unseen paths of the deep.

"I love music on the water," said Miss Belmont; "and am sorry there are no instruments on board."

"It was a strange piece of forgetfulness of mine," replied sir Horace.

"Which you must make good, by singing us the song you wrote, and lady Clare composed," said Mrs. Carleton.

Sir Horace bowed, said a lady's commands were not to be disputed; and he commenced, in a rich manly voice, a song in praise of his yacht—

Like curlew o'er the watery waste,
My Sea Nymph breasts the angry gale;
She heeds not winter's howling blast,
On, on she flies, nor slackens sail.

My Sea Nymph, at the dawn of day,
Darts o'er the misty billows tide;
And smiles and dances in the ray,
That robes with gold the rippling tide.

Amid the starless gloom of night,
My Nymph her wings will never fold;
O'er pathless waves she takes her flight,
Steady, and swift her way will hold,

Away, away, my Sea Nymph flies,
And tacks, and heels, as I command,
Till she our peaceful harbour spies,
And anchors on her master's land."

The countess dowager was the only per-

son who did not applaud the singer, and allow that the praises he bestowed on his Sea Nymph were merited: she was heartily tired of the water, the yacht, and her companions; and when anchored near a flight of marble steps, she mentally vowed to return by land, and never again to make one in a party of young ladies.

HAVING ascended the steps, they entered a neat cottage, where they were invited to repose themselves, and partake of the simple refreshment of fresh-churned butter, brown bread, and curds and cream, which was cheerfully accepted by all the party; even the fastidious dowager did not refuse the curds and cream, though she thought sir Horace Clare had shewn but little taste in bringing them so far, if he had no better place to introduce them to than a dairy-house, covered with honeysuckles and jessamine, which certainly was a very indifferent specimen of the paradise she had been taught to expect; and for the young man himself, as commander of the Sea Nymph, he was very well, and cut a tolerable figure issuing his orders to his men on the deck of his little vessel;

but on shore it was quite different—he had neither the look, the gait, the address, or finish, of a gentleman; she perceived he was much taken with Miss Lambart; but she hoped the young lady had more taste, than to approve his florid cheeks, unmeaning eyes, and coarse vulgar laugh.

The heart of Miss Lambart was in no danger from sir Horace Clare.—it was shielded by a strong though utterly hopeless passion for another; and that other, though a model of manly beauty, did not prevent her doing justice to the handsome person and unpretending manners of sir Horace Clare, who, though not so highly polished, so finished, as the person she had been associated with at Doneraile Castle, made ample compensation for these deficiencies, by nobleness of spirit, sterling sense, and a generous, friendly disposition.

The baroness of Wandesford had entered into conversation with the mistress of the cottage, a healthy, pretty-looking young woman, to whose apron a boy with a head all curls was clinging, and who held another still younger, with laughing eyes, in her arms, on the subject of her

little family—a very uninteresting, and somewhat vulgar topic, in the opinion of the dowager countess, who listened, wearied and annoyed, as the woman said—
“ True for me then, please you, my lady, who feel gist so happy as the bird that hops upon the spray yonder; and for why should not I, when Dennis is a nate, clever, industrious man, loving and kind to me, and fond of his children.”

While this conversation was passing, sir Horace Clare was directing Miss Lambert's attention to a pair of doves that were nestling among the honeysuckles, and earnestly commenting on their love and their happiness; and Mrs. Carleton was declaring she could be content to live all her days in such a retired tranquil spot.

“ I by no means pretend to condemn your taste, Mrs. Carleton,” said the dowager, “ but I should go mad in such a seclusion. Rivers and cottages are pretty objects to see, now and then, but Heaven avert such a calamity from me; as to be compelled to have them always before my eyes!”

As she spoke, she fancied she heard the

sound of wheels; and the next moment sir Horace threw open a door at the opposite side of the cottage; and to her infinite delight, she beheld two carriages, into one of which, with the baroness and Miss Lambart, she was handed; while the gentlemen, mounting horses, rode beside them, through a lane shaded with trees, which, after several windings, brought them in sight of an elegant mansion.—“That, ladies,” said the honourable Mr. Carleton, popping his head in at the carriage-window, “that handsome-looking house is Eden Lodge.”

“Pardon me, my friend,” replied sir Horace; “it is now proper I should inform the ladies that I have brought them to Claremount, the seat and residence of my honoured mother, lady Clare.”

CHAP. III.

Press not on me thy suit of love,
On me who ne'er can love bestow ;
Far brig' 'er fortune thou shalt prove,
Than share with me a life of wo.
For what but wo could thee betide,
Shouldst thou thy earnest wish obtain,
For thou a cold and heartless bride,
Wouldst to thy ardent bosom strain.
In pity leave me to the grief,
That unreveal'd must still remain,
To fade like summer's blighted leaf,
That never shall revive again.

If you could read that woman's heart,
Survey the vices nourish'd there,
With horror from her charms you'd start,
And deem her beauty but a snare,
False tongue, deluding smiles, you gain
An easy conquest o'er the heart ;
Still on confiding love bestowing pain,
And sad regret that never shall depart.

THE romantic situation of Claremount, with its extensive and highly-ornamented grounds and gardens, rich in every natural and foreign production, justly entitled it to be called Eden, and to the eye of Miss Lambart, it would indeed have been almost Paradise, while wandering in the

groves, and refreshed by the lucid waters of the fountains. Had her thoughts been tranquil, and her mind at peace, there she might have regained health, and reasoned herself into content, had not sir Horace Clare's very pointed attentions rendered her uneasy, and apprehensive of his making a declaration, which the state of her feelings warned her she could not approve nor encourage.

The style of magnificence in which lady Clare lived, the company she kept, all of the first class, the certainty that sir Horace was heir to a princely fortune, reconciled the fastidious dowager countess of Vandeleur to what she called his want of finish; he appeared to have tact, and being so young, she believed it possible for him to acquire that fashionable polish, in dress, manner, and conversation, which exclusively belong to the higher ranks of society, and which she wished should distinguish a person, whom it seemed highly probable would become one of her near connections. It was evident to her, that he much admired Miss Lambert, and she saw no reasonable objection that could be

made by the young lady to a handsome young man, of high family, and fortune equal if not superior to her own.

Lady Clare and the baroness Wandesford, in their private conversations, had agreed on the fitness of the match; and though determined, neither by hint or persuasion, to influence the parties. they looked forward with hope for a confirmation of their wishes.

Lady Ogle was not an unconcerned observer of sir Horace Clare's admiration of Miss Lambart; while fawning and plausible in her behaviour, she writhed with the tortures inflicted by envy, hatred, and malice, for she saw that Miss Lambart had completely cut out her daughter, who, possessing neither the beauty, accomplishments, nor riches of her rival, was now less than ever likely to succeed in subduing the inflexible heart of sir Horace.

Poor Flora, a mere puppet in the hands of her selfemg mother, had, under her instruction, acted melancholy to the best of her abilities; she was now performing ill health, and with a most disappointing

effect, for sir Horace continued blind to her sighs and languishments, and deaf to the hints thrown out by her artful mother, that she feared her dear child's was a mental disease, a disorder of the heart, which would end fatally, if not speedily removed.

Sir Horace would not understand, and instead of urging Flora to join the party in the excursions he was continually planning, he cruelly acquiesced in her assertion, that the very delicate state of her health would not admit of exposure to the heat of the sun, and that her spirits being so excessively languid, she could not bear exertion, and allowed that it certainly was best for her to remain tranquil at home, and avoid any accident that might occur to agitate or alarm her.

It was impossible for lady Ogle or her daughter to resent or reject such friendly advice; they concealed their indignation and discontent, for it was part of lady Ogle's plan to save a few pounds against the winter; and to have quitted Claremount before the term of their invitation expired, would be to incur expences, a measure which was opposed as well by

her ladyship's empty purse, as by her hope that Flora would yet succeed with sir Horace, though she called him a stupid insensible sca-calf, his mother a dotting old driveller; and as to Miss Lambart, because she was rich, she was called a beauty; but if she had been poor, she would have been thought nothing at all of: her singing was downright squalling; her drawing and painting mere scratching and daubing; her manner was formal and affected; her dress prim and dowdy: the dowager countess was haughty and disagreeable; and the baroness Wandesford as queer and antiquated in her notions as if she had been contemporary with Brien Boru, whose exploits she was so perpetually relating.

"She has a most surprising memory, to be sure," observed Miss Ogle.

"I detest people who have memories," returned lady Ogle; "their recollections are often very impertinent and inconvenient."

"Particularly tradespeople," resumed Flora, "who always remember to send in their long bills, and never forget to be

troublesome for payment. Oh, if I had but half Miss Lambert's wealth——"

"That odious creature's name makes me ill," interrupted lady Ogle; "for I am convinced she is the bar in the way of your success with sir Horace; and with him her sole attraction is her fortune."

"Allowing all this, mamma," said Flora, "I must say I had no more hope of winning sir Horace before her arrival than I have at present: all the men, as far as I see, are mercenary wretches—they all marry for money, not for love. I am sure I did all I could to make myself agreeable to lord Neagle, yet I never could get him beyond politeness; but as soon as the rich Miss Belmont was introduced to his acquaintance, her heavy purse made a deep impression, and he made her an offer immediately."

"Yes, yes, child, that affair was managed by the Carletons," replied her ladyship; "for with all his sense, it is easy to see that Mr. Carleton can persuade lord Neagle to any thing. I do not wish to insinuate or speak against her reputation, but some husbands are hoodwinked by their wives."

"Mr. Carleton is very good-tempered," said Flora.

"So are all fools," replied lady Ogle.

"He always gives way to Mrs. Carleton's opinion," resumed Flora; "she can make him believe black is white. I wish sir Horace Clare was as persuasible; but he is impenetrable as a rock, and as obstinate as a mule."

"I suppose I shall die an old maid, let me be ever so willing to marry," said Miss Ogle; "but there is no resisting destiny; and I recollect my old nurse, Judy M'Farley, told me that——"

"I beg, Miss Ogle," interrupted her ladyship, "that you will not repeat the old fool's nonsense to me, nor talk to me about destiny; I despise such folly: we make our own destinies, Miss Ogle; our own conduct, our own skilful management of time and opportunity, makes or mars our fortunes."

"I am sure," replied Flora, "I have always been guided by you, mamma; and if I have not got established in life, it has been no fault of mine; but I am quite certain sir Horace Clare will never make

me an offer; and I see no use for us to remain here; we had better shorten our visit, and return to Dublin."

"It would be good manners in you, Miss Ogle, to wait till I ask your opinion and advice. How should a young inexperienced girl like you know which is the best course to pursue? To return to Dublin would be to incur expence, to endure the daily mortification of being dunned for money it is not convenient to pay. No, no, Miss Ogle, that will never do; the evil day must be put off as long as possible. Here we are living luxuriously, at free cost, and never hear those odious detestable words, debtor and creditor; if I return to Dublin, I shall have to encounter a scanty table, impertinent servants, and, worse even than these, the importunity of clamorous and insolent tradespeople."

"Heigho!" sighed Miss Ogle; "I am sure I have no particular wish to return to Dublin. Claremount is a very delightful place, and I should greatly prefer it to any other I have ever seen, only I plainly see

I have not the least chance to get a husband here."

"Have you any better chance at Dublin?" asked her ladyship.

"No, mamma, not that I know of," replied Miss Ogle, sorrowfully.

"Something must be done, and that speedily," resumed her ladyship, starting up, and placing on her head the turban she had been busily employed in altering the shape of, to give it the appearance of a new one. "I hear the dinner-bell."

"I suppose I may, as well recover my spirits and my appetite?" said Miss Ogle; "for affecting the invalid makes no impression on sir Horace."

"Remain in the dressing-room; I will take care to have dinner sent up to you."

Flora was tired of confinement in a close room, and longed for exercise and fresh air; but she dared not disobey her mother's command, who repeated—"Remain where you are; a thought has struck me, and I have something to propose that may turn to your advantage, if you have but courage for the undertaking."

While lady Ogle's prolific brain was ar-

ranging a scheme to compel sir Horace Clare to marry her daughter, he was becoming every hour more sensible of the charms, endowments, and merits of Miss Lambart, and consulting with his mother on the propriety of making an immediate declaration of his love.

Lady Clare, according to the etiquette of the old school, informed the baroness Wandesford and the dowager countess of Vandeleur of her son's passion for Miss Lambart. The baroness expressed her approbation of the alliance, provided the dear child herself raised no objection. The dowager saw no reason to suppose Miss Lambart could object to a lover so eligible in rank, fortune, and person; a more intimate acquaintance with sir Horace Clare had convinced the dowager that he would very soon acquire the polish of a man of fashion, for he paid her opinions the deference and attention that proved his good taste and superior understanding.

Having written a letter expressive of his feelings, wishes, and hopes, sir Horace Clare placed it in the hands of the baroness Wandesford, beseeching her to advocate

his cause. The baroness smiled, and promised to deliver the missive, at the same time observing, in so important an affair, the heart ought not to be influenced by persuasion, but to be left free to make its own election. — “Miss Lambart,” continued the worthy old lady, “has understanding above her years, an amiable disposition, and correct principles, and will, I am certain, sir Horace, accept or reject your addresses according to her conscience, and the exact state of her feelings.”

Conscience and feeling are words that a modern young man of rank would ridicule and hear with contempt; but sir Horace Clare had escaped the contagion of the world; he had himself conscience and principle, and confessed that a marriage contracted without attending to those monitors could never be happy.

When the baroness retired, it was the custom of Miss Lambart to attend her to her chamber, to offer up with her an evening sacrifice of prayer, thanksgiving, and praise, and to receive her blessing. The baroness, while embracing, and bidding her good night, placed the letter sir Horace

had committed to her charge in the hand of Ada, who listened with a throbbing heart to her venerable friend's injunction to read it attentively, and give it serious consideration before she replied to it.

Having gained the privacy of her dressing-room, Miss Lambart examined the seal; it bore the crest of the Clares, and convinced her that what she had dreaded was now come to pass, and that she was about to read an avowal of love, sanctioned by her best and dearest friend, the only parent she had ever known. Ada was some time before she could command sufficient courage to break the seal, and she wept convulsively as she read, and felt the impossibility of accepting proposals approved and authorized by those relatives to whom her mother had consigned the protection of her person and estates; her already occupied heart painfully convinced her of the impossibility of accepting addresses that could from her meet no return. Her venerable friend had bade her consider seriously before she replied, and in pursuance of this advice, she examined her feelings strictly; justice and candour allow-

ed that sir Horacé Clare was in person handsome, his principles, understanding, and temper, such as promised to ensure the happiness of the female he honoured with his choice. To his proposals, Ada could offer but one objection; it was a decisive one—her affections were pre-occupied.

Blushing, weeping, and regretting, she at once resolved to decline addresses she could not with honour receive, she acknowledged the worth of sir Horace Clare, but her affection was, not hers to bestow, and it was agony to think was given to one unacquainted with her sentiments in his favour, to one, whom it was most probable she should never see again.—“It is far better,” thought Ada, “that sir Horace should suffer present disappointment, than be wedded to a cold heartless bride, and endure a long life of incurable misery; for to a mind ardent and sensitive as his, it would be misery in the extreme to discover that he had a wife incapable of returning his affection, and whose conduct towards him was influenced only by a sense of duty.”

Twenty times Ada attempted to write, but her tears blinded and made blots upon the paper; till weary of her unsuccessful efforts, she threw aside her pen, and resolved in the morning to throw herself at the feet of the baronet and confess the weakness that was clouding her felicity and proving upon her health; but in the next moment she was seized with a cold and irresolute hesitation stopped the disclosure; her delicacy shrank from avowing that she loved a man so unworthy; that she had at first sight rejected and undesired, surrendered her affection to a person of whose good looks and qualities she had no knowledge, and of whose report, and that from a person so unworthy to become a near connection.

After having given way for some time to tears and self-upbraidings, Ada began to think that it was not likely so lively and mirthful a disposition as sir Horace Clare's, would suffer much disappointment from her rejection of his suit.—“Men,” thought Ada, “never do not think so deep—or feel so acutely as we do; love with them is a matter of amusement or interest,

to be cast off or encouraged as it seems likely to afford pleasure, or produce emolument; and why should I distress myself by supposing that sir Horace Clare has different views, and is actuated by purer sentiments than others of his sex?"

Persuaded that his declaration of love that lay before her, had been prompted by a transient liking, which would be easily conquered, Ada took up her pen, and was about to write a polite but decided rejection of the young baronet's addresses, when a loud and piercing shriek caused her to let fall the pen, and start from her seat. Trembling and dismayed, she stood apprehending she knew not what, when shriek after shriek, each more violent and terrific than the former, sounded on her ear, and in the next instant hurried footsteps passed the dressing-room door, at which Miss Lambart stood alarmed, and unable to inquire what dreadful accident had occurred. Among a confusion of voices, she heard those of lady Ogle and sir Horace Clare, but could not distinguish what was said by either party.

Having been taught to believe that Miss Ogle was extremely ill, she began to think that she was dead—an apprehension she was speedily relieved from, by the dowager countess of Vandeleur tapping at the door, and bidding her not to be alarmed, for neither fire, murder, nor robbery, had taken place.

Assured by the cheerful voice of the dowager, Miss Lambart opened the door, and to her inquiry of what had happened, to occasion such fearful outcries? the dowager replied, something very like the discovery of a *liaison* between Miss Ogle and sir Horace Clare.

“Surely, my dear madam, this must be a mistake, a misapprehension—he never can be such a hypocrite.”

“Why really, in such an orderly mansion as this, and under the eye of so correct a mother, it is hard to believe any thing immoral in the character and conduct of sir Horace; but appearances are certainly against him.”

“He cannot be so depraved, so dead to all honourable feeling, as to make a decla-

ration of love to me," said Miss Lambart, "and solicit my hand, while he has an attachment to another!"

"There is nothing new or surprising in such conduct," replied the dowager; "we hear of similar proceedings in the fashionable world every day, without any sort of attachment between the parties; but, to a certainty, sir Horace and Miss Ogle have been indulging in a moonlight *tête-à-tête* in the picture-gallery; whether for the purpose of studying astronomy, or making love, is best known to themselves. The young lady, it seems, who reposes in the same room with her mamma, left her sleeping, and with only a thin *robe-de-chambre* covering her fair person, stole from her chamber, and repaired to the gallery, whether by appointment or not, I cannot say; neither did I learn what cause of offence sir Horace had given her, that occasioned her falling into fits, and shrieking sufficiently loud to rouse up lady Ogle, Mr. and Mrs. Carleton, lord Neagle, and myself; I really believed the house was on fire, but seeing the confusion of sir Horace, and

hearing the tittering of the servants, I guessed how the case stood ; and finding the imprudent girl was recovering, I took my departure, for I detest scenes ; but not without observing that Miss Ogle's hair was hanging in disorder upon her shoulders, that her slippers were kicked off, and the ruffles torn, and hanging from the sleeves of her *robe-de-chambre*."

"How I pity the unfortunate girl!" said Miss Lambert ; " what must lady Ogle's feelings be at this shocking exposure of her daughter's imprudence !"

"Not very acute, if I read correctly," replied the dowager.

"This discovery," resumed Miss Lambert, " will render an answer to the letter sir Horace has written me unnecessary."

"Certainly," replied the dowager, " till he has cleared up the mystery of this midnight meeting, which, after all, appears a mystery to no one but lady Ogle, who pretends to say her poor Flora must have walked in her sleep to the gallery ; but we shall learn more of the affair to-morrow ; *bon soir*, and do not let this silly affair

keep you awake—for if you should lose sir Horace, there are——”

“Be assured, madam,” interrupted Ada, “I did not intend to accept sir Horace, and that his loss will by no means afflict or disappoint me: I am only sorry for Miss Ogle, to whom, it should seem, he has acted very deceitfully; but I trust he is not so lost to honourable feeling, as to refuse her the only reparation it is in his power to make her.”

“If you mean matrimony,” returned the dowager, “that I am convinced will never take place between them; but, *bon repos*; we will talk over this *mal aventure* to-morrow—at present I am fatigued and sleepy.”

When left alone, Ada began to reflect on certain expressions that had fallen from Miss Ogle, all pointing at the mutability and deceitfulness of men, and the little credit their professions of love ought to obtain, for they too frequently sought and won the affections of a confiding female, only to laugh at her credulity, and triumph in her weakness.

“Unfortunate girl!” said the pitying

GERALD FITZGERALD.

Ada; "I little suspected you were alluding to your own case; but I will hope, if sir Horace Clare has sought and gained your affections, he will not be so cruel, so wanting of humanity, as to forsake you. —I can now account," thought Miss Lambart, "for her almost rude behaviour to me; she was jealous of the attentions I received from sir Horace, which she considered ought to have been exclusively hers. Had she been able to read my heart, she would have seen I had no wish for his preference, and that she had nothing to apprehend from me. Poor girl, I compassionate her sufferings; for though I have never known the misery of being deceived and forsaken, I feel the agony of hopeless love."

It was the custom of sir Horace Clare, before retiring to rest, to ascertain in what quarter the wind lay, and to take a view of his Sea Nymph, that lay at anchor opposite the windows of the picture-gallery, and to learn from her position if all was well on board. Lady Ogle, interested in all the movements of sir Horace, had found out that he often remained more than an

hour in the gallery, where he kept a variety of telescopes and night-glasses, with which he was in the habit of making astronomical observations; she determined to make his nocturnal amusements subservient to her designs, and by striking a bold stroke, compel him to consider a marriage with Miss Ogle an unavoidable measure.—“Flora,” said her ladyship, “if you act up to my plan, I have not the least doubt but in a short time you will be mistress of this magnificent mansion and domain.”

But Miss Ogle did not altogether approve her mother's scheme; for though in general heedless of consequences when she had a part to perform, she could not help perceiving that the present plot was likely to injure her reputation, and might perhaps fail in producing the desired reparation. But all her representations and objections were overruled by her ladyship, who flattered, persuaded, and menaced, till Flora sallied forth, with the conviction that if she failed to win a rich husband, she should incur certain contempt and derision.

Unconscious of the coming tempest, sir Horace was intently watching the transit of a planet, when Miss Ogle made him start, by placing her hand on his shoulder, for he had not heard her enter the gallery. The night was perfectly calm, the wind seemed to sleep, for not a cloud veiled the bright face of the moon, which, as he hastily turned from the open window, illumined the loosely-arrayed form of Miss Ogle.—“Flora!” exclaimed the astonished young man, “what can bring you here?—what has happened?—why have you left your bed?”

“I left my bed because I could not sleep,” replied she, “and because I wished—but surely you need not ask what brings me here—is your heart indeed so insensible, that it cannot frame my answer!”

Sir Horace did not reply.

“Can it not tell you I came hither to seek you?”

“If you have any thing to say to me,” said sir Horace, “I am sorry you have chosen such an hour and such a place for your communication: should any of the servants be still up, and chance to see you, they will have opinions, and form conjec-

tures, injurious to us both. Retire instantly, I entreat you, to-morrow, in the presence of lady Ogle, you can tell me; for I am certain you can have nothing to say to me but what she may hear."

"No, I will not wait till to-morrow," said Flora; "I will unburden my breaking heart to-night—this very now; I am already miserable, and the opinions and conjectures of servants, or of the whole world, cannot render me more completely wretched."

"I am sorry to hear you speak thus," replied sir Horace; "but again I beseech you, return to your chamber, and instead of me, make your mother your confidant; she is certainly more capable of giving you advice and consolation than I am, who——"

"I have ruined my peace, destroyed my health, and made life hateful to me."

"These are heavy charges indeed, Miss Ogle, and would make me extremely unhappy," returned sir Horace, "did not conscience exonerate me from having at all contributed to create the wretchedness of which you complain."

"You have created, you have occasion-

ed my misery," resumed Flora; "and your conduct will drive me mad, will urge me to suicide."

"Of what, in the name of Heaven, do you accuse me?" asked sir Horace, more and more perplexed and astonished.

"Of what do I accuse you?" repeated Flora, affecting to weep; "alas for me! of deceit and perfidy: deluded by your attentions, I believed I had made an impression on your heart: have you not been, till lately, constantly at my side—reading to me—singing to me—dancing with me?"

"All which I considered you demanded from my politeness as a gentleman, and from my duty to my mother, respecting you as her guest."

"Barbarous, cruel sophistication!" exclaimed Flora; "your attentions won my affections, and I was happy in the belief that your conduct towards me was actuated by love."

"If you have so deluded yourself," replied sir Horace, "I lament your error, Miss Ogle; but can take no blame to my behaviour, which was no more particular

to you than to other young ladies, the visitors of lady Clare; and I must beg leave to recal to your remembrance, that I have frequently told you, that I had never seen a female whose charms could satisfy my fastidious taste, and that it would be long before I made up my mind to marry."

"Yes, yes, I recollect this," said Flora, "but I thought you spoke in jest; for your smiles and your looks told me a different story. Unhappy creature that I am, to have been so deceived! but, Horace, dear, dear sir Horace, are you not at this moment jesting with me?—are you not putting my devoted heart to trial? Indeed, indeed, you need not doubt my sincerity. Oh, pity me! and believe I do most truly love, and never can love any one but you."

"I have a better opinion of your understanding, Miss Ogle," returned sir Horace, "than to suppose you would waste your thoughts on me, who never had an intention to aspire to any nearer title than that of your friend. Come, Flora, exert the good sense I know you possess, and be assured, I would do much to insure your happi-

ness, for though I do not love, I very sincerely wish you well."

"Insensible! unfeeling!" exclaimed Miss Ogle; "I understand why I am rejected; I am not blind—the rich Miss Lambart has eclipsed the poor Flora Ogle—the attention you once paid me is now lavished on her—I have narrowly watched you both—I have seen her art—her——"

"Hold!" interrupted sir Horace; "accuse me according to the suggestions of your wild fancy, but presume not to utter a word of reproach against that angel."

Miss Ogle gave a loud shriek—"To me do you call her angel?—to me, whose prospects her arts have blighted?—an angel!—to me she will prove a destroying one."

Full of indignation and contempt, sir Horace pointed to the door—"I insist," said he, "that you retire to your chamber immediately; you have sufficiently disturbed and annoyed me."

"I will not stir from this spot," persisted Flora, "till you faithfully promise me you will not allow Miss Lambart to——"

"I will promise nothing," replied sir Horace, irritated at her behaviour; "leave

me instantly, or I must, in self-defence, however reluctant I feel to expose your imprudence, summon your mother to take you hence." As he spoke, he endeavoured to lead her towards the door; but resisting his intention, she clung to him, shrieking violently and repeatedly, till hearing approaching footsteps, she screamed again and again, and releasing him from her hold, threw herself on the floor, and acted all the contortions of a convulsion fit, in which she contrived to drag down her hair, kick off her slippers, and tear her night-dress.

Vexed, and somewhat alarmed, sir Horace vainly tried to raise her from the floor, in which attempt he was found by lady Ogle, who appeared as just risen from bed, followed by Mr. and Mrs. Carleton, the dowager countess of Vandeleur, lord Neagle, and several of the servants, half dressed. Lady Ogle, with well-acted agitation, demanded of sir Horace an explanation of the scene before her, and what he had done to her child—her dear Flora, to reduce her to that deplorable state, for the young lady kept grinding her teeth and

rolling her eyes in a terrific manner.—“What has happened to my darling Flora?” asked lady Ogle; “in pity to a mother’s feelings, answer me some of you.” But the only person who could have answered was sir Horace Clare, and he, unwilling to accuse the young lady of indiscretion, hesitated to reply.

“Alas! alas!” resumed lady Ogle, fixing her eyes on sir Horace, “yours is the silence of guilt: my child—my simple artless child!” continued she, wringing her hands, “my darling Flora, you are undone—your reputation is sullied.

“Do not you, her mother, be the first to condemn, and fix a stigma upon her,” said sir Horace; “I solemnly declare she has suffered no injury or wrong from me, in any way—see, she is recovering—question Miss Ogle, madam, she will acquit me, and redeem her reputation.”

“It is useless to question her,” replied lady Ogle; “the situation in which you have been discovered unhappily confirms your guilt and her disgrace; her shrieks, and the disorder of her dress, are proofs that she resisted your vile solicitations,

vile seducer of innocence! you shall be compelled to do her justice; you shall repair the disgrace you have brought upon her family—yes, the law shall oblige you to repair the injury you have done her reputation by marrying her.”

“No, no, no,” sobbed a young girl, one of the house-maids; “sir Horace is—” The girl could utter no more; she fainted, and was carried from the gallery by some of her fellow-servants.

Miss Ogle not being considered in a state to give an account of what had taken place between sir Horace and herself, was, at the desire of her weeping mother, assisted to her chamber.

Before she left the gallery, lady Ogle bade sir Horace repent of his wickedness, to reflect seriously on the injury he had done to the reputation of her artless inexperienced child—an injury which could only be repaired by his marrying her immediately. She protested she pitied the feelings of lady Clare, but affection for her own child was paramount to every other consideration, and would compel her to appeal to her ladyship’s high sense of ho-

nour, for the justice due to her outraged daughter, should she survive the insult she had sustained. With this flourish lady Ogle departed, and the ladies having before retired, sir Horace invited the gentlemen to his apartment, where he gave them a correct explanation of the extraordinary scene they had witnessed.

Lord Neagle and Mr. Carleton laughed heartily at the fiery temptation he had undergone, and the disappointment of Miss Ogle.

"The much-famed continence of Scipio," observed Mr. Carleton, "is nothing, when compared with the virtue and forbearance of sir Horace Clare, who, when a young, and not ugly female, with all the ardency of passion throws herself into his arms, resists temptation with the heroic fortitude of a saint."

"This has been a concerted plan of her match-making mother's," said lord Neagle; "for though a tolerable good actress, Flora has not brains to machinate a scene equal in point and spirit with that which has taken place. Her crafty ladyship hoped to work upon your feelings, sir Horace, and pre-

vail upon you to marry her daughter, to whom a husband, wealthy as yourself, would be the consummation of all their wishes."

"I pity from my soul the poverty that reduces them to the necessity of practising such contemptible arts," replied sir Horace; "but they will be greatly disappointed if they believe I will submit to be made their dupe and victim."

Having parted with his friends, sir Horace retired to bed, but not to sleep; for though conscious that he had in no way misled, or at any moment given Miss Ogle occasion to believe he loved, or intended to make her an offer of his hand, he felt uneasy respecting the belief Miss Lambert and her friends might attach to her assertions, and the representations of her still more artful mother, how far their fabrications might influence her to reject his suit. Tossing on his pillow, he impatiently waited for the hour when he might, without disturbing his mother's repose, visit her apartment, and make her acquainted with the unpleasant occurrences of the night, and take her advice re-

specting his future conduct: sleep at last stole away uneasy thoughts and feelings, and wove for him a dream of happiness, that lasted till far beyond his usual time of rising.

Just as he reached the door of his mother's chamber, he met the housekeeper, an old and highly-valued servant, with the young girl who had fainted in the gallery, coming out of her ladyship's room. From the housekeeper he learned that she was commissioned by lady Clare to request he would go to her immediattly.

"Is my mother ill?" asked sir Horace.

"The Gracious forbid, sir Horace! oh no, her ladyship is quite well; but she might have been made ill by wicked misrepresentations, had not this good girl, by telling the truth, given her a preventative."

Before sir Horace could ask an explanation of her words, old Alice and her companion had dropped their courtesies, and moved away.

Lady Clare having blessed and embraced her son, spared him the recital of the last night's most unpleasant adventure, by telling him she knew all.

“My dear mother,” observed sir Horace, “you can only have gained the knowledge of what passed after Miss Ogle’s shrieks alarmed the house; what previously occurred, can only be related by myself, as there was no witness to our conversation in the gallery.”

Lady Clare smiled—“I am most happy to inform you,” said she, “that there were two witnesses concealed in the gallery, who have voluntarily come forward, to assert and prove you innocent of the foul charge brought against you by lady Ogle. Your own statement of the affair—your own word, my beloved Horace, would have been all-sufficient to convince me, that you are too honourable minded, too humane of heart, to trifle with the affections, or bring disgrace on female reputation, I am certain; but no one knows how far lady Ogle may be led to proceed, in the hope of prevailing on you to marry her daughter; but rather, much rather, than you should so bestow your hand, I would see you laid in the grave.” As she spoke, a flush of honourable pride and virtuous feeling suffused the handsome

features of the high-born and noble-minded lady Clare, who, pressing a maternal kiss on the white forehead of her son, continued to say—"My Horace, my dear and only one, you must be certain it is not to the poverty of Miss Ogle I object—no, it is to her principles. Under the tuition of her mother, she has become a creature of art, professing what she never feels; and is ready to contract a mercenary marriage with the first that offers."

"Be assured, my dearest mother," replied Horace, affectionately pressing her hand, "be assured you cannot be more averse to an alliance with Miss Ogle than I am; but who are the witnesses you were speaking of? what can any one know of the conversation that passed between Miss Ogle and myself? It was bright moonlight; the extreme end of the gallery was visible; had only one been present, I must have seen them."

"Luckily for you," said lady Clare, "Susan, the new housemaid, had a curiosity to see the burning mountain that Thomas, the under-butler, had told her were in the moon; and she had persuaded

him to go with her to the gallery, supposing you were gone to bed, to point and steady the lunar telescope, that she might see the wonders he had described: the opening of your dressing-room door alarmed her and her companion; she began to think of her imprudence in being alone with a man at that hour of the night, and the certain loss of her character if she was discovered; the man too was afraid of a reprimand for meddling with the telescopes; to avoid which he drew the terrified girl behind the curtain that falls over the group of dancing nymphs, where they not only heard, but saw, all that took place; and I am most sincerely thankful their statement perfectly exonerates you from the shadow of blame: so for once you see, Horace," continued lady Clare, smiling, "female curiosity has been productive of good."

Miss Ogle, if not really indisposed, was ashamed of the indelicate part she had been induced to perform, that she kept her bed the whole of the next day, and left her mother to bewail the disgrace that she persisted had fallen upon her to lady

Clare, to argue with, persuade, and menace, sir Horace; till finding him inexorable, and lady Clare unbelieving and distant, she made an attempt to interest the honourable Mrs. Carleton in the cause of her poor injured child; but that lady having had a statement of the facts, made such severe comments on her ladyship's conduct in the affair, that she flew to her chamber, to vent on Flora the rage she felt at being ridiculed and defeated, while Flora was vindicating herself with her usual—"I am sure it is no fault of mine," a tap at the door was the signal for silence. Lady Ogle, with her handkerchief at her eyes, admitted one of the female servants, who presenting a note, retired without speaking.

"What impertinence!" exclaimed lady Ogle.

"Who is the note from?" asked Flora.

"Allow me to open it, Miss Ogle," said her ladyship, breaking the seal. "Strange conduct—hum, hum! Disagreeable necessity—hum, hum, hum! Shorten your visit—hum, hum, hum! Expedite your departure — how extremely insolent to

desire me to go, at a time so very inconvenient! 'There, Miss Ogle,' throwing the note on the bed, "you may read the note, which, I dare say, is no secret; from the air of the minx that delivered it, I have no doubt but the contents are known, even in the servants' hall."

The note was from lady Clare, and contained a polite intimation, that it was expected they would leave Claremont, where their stay was no longer agreeable.

"Excessively rude and disagreeable!" exclaimed lady Ogle, tearing the note to pieces.

"I am sure, after what has happened," said Flora, "I shall be glad to go. It would be very disagreeable, in my opinion, to stay."

"But vastly convenient," replied her ladyship.

"I could never look lady Clare in the face," resumed Flora.

"It certainly would be more agreeable to look into her money-bags," said lady Ogle; "but as we have no chance to get a peep, we must bear the disappointment

as well as we can, and hope for better success another time."

Flora was more mortified than she dared to express, at their disgraceful dismissal, and determined in her own mind, never to incur similar contempt.

Lady Ogle appeared to think lightly of the affair—"But to return to Dublin just then," she said, "would derange her saving plan; we must go somewhere for a couple of months; and I must look over my list of invitations, that I may decide whither to steer our course." After a few moments spent in considering where it was likely to meet rich bachelors, she commanded Flora to throw off her illness, and prepare for departure.

"Whither do you intend going?" asked Flora.

"Why, not to a place where I expect much pleasure," replied lady Ogle; "but for your sake, and in the hope of procuring you a wealthy establishment, I am content to put up with dullness and insipidity."

Flora's heart sank as she perceived her mother was projecting another scheme;

but determined to disappoint it, she suffered no expostulation to escape her lips.

“ You recollect, Flora, the invitation sir Phelim O’Brady gave us to visit Castle Brady ?”

“ Yes, mamma ; but that was only to see its antiquities, and his aviary of foreign birds, if we passed that way.”

“ I shall avail myself of his invitation, to stay a few weeks with him ; he cannot be so unmannerly as to turn us out of doors. I shall take care to make myself agreeable to Miss Penelope, his maiden sister, who is, to be sure, a strange formal piece of antiquity, and as great a curiosity as any in or about the castle ; and if you play your cards dexterously, you may succeed with an old fool, though you have failed with a young one.”

Miss Ogle offered no word of objection to this new plan ; and satisfied with the acquiescence her silence implied, her ladyship busied herself in preparing for their departure : but Flora, whose heart was not actually bad, nor insensible to the contempt she had incurred, determined never to lend herself again to her mother’s

projects, but to escape as soon as possible from her tyranny, which she soon after effected, by eloping with a wine-merchant, with whom she became acquainted at Castle Brady, where he paid his annual respects to sir Phelim, who was his god-father. Lady Ogle refused to forgive her low-minded daughter; she renounced the degraded creature, who had united herself to a plebeian, and preferred peace and plenty, in the middle rank of life, to an ill-furnished table, a scanty wardrobe, and the mean subterfuges and artful schemes in which she was perpetually engaged by her titled mother.

However satisfied part of lady Clare's guests were of the upright conduct of sir Horace, in all that related to Miss Ogle, the baroness Wandesford, in spite of the amiable light in which she had hitherto beheld his character, could not persuade herself that he was perfectly ingenuous in the account he gave of the midnight adventure in the picture-gallery; she thought if he had not made an appointment with Miss Ogle, which he protested he had not,

he must have taken an ungenerous advantage of her weak and misplaced affection for him, and treated her with unbecoming freedom, or she would not have shrieked and exposed her reputation to surmises and animadversions, which could not fail to injure her in public opinion. The worthy baroness, because she would not wound the feelings of lady Clare, was careful not to express her opinion on the subject; but she was secretly pleased, when Miss Lambart modestly, but firmly, declared her resolve to reject the proposals of sir Horace.

“For the present, I suppose you mean,” said the dowager countess of Vandeleur. “Well, I think that decision very proper, and extremely considerate on your part; for certainly, just at this crisis, to consent to marry sir Horace, would effectually destroy Miss Ogle’s character; not that I credit a single syllable of her statement of the gallery affair; on the contrary, I am convinced sir Horace Clare never, at any moment of his life, made love to her, directly or indirectly; and the account sir Horace gives of the business is borne out and corroborated by the evidence of two of his

mother's servants, persons of unimpeached veracity: yet notwithstanding my absolute conviction of the whole being a scheme fabricated by lady Ogle, to entrap the heir of Claremount into marriage with her daughter, yet I highly approve of your delicacy and prudence, in declining his addresses at present; for you will meet at Dublin in the winter; lady Ogle and her daughter, finding sir Horace is not the gudgeon they believed, and will not be hooked, by that time, it is probable, will be busily engaged in another project, and the intimacy between ourselves and lady Clare will afford opportunity to renew the proposals, which both parties must see cannot be acceded to with propriety at present."

"Nor ever by me, madam," replied Miss Lambart; "whether guilty or not of deceiving Miss Ogle, sir Horace Clare will never be accepted by me."

"What nonsense!" exclaimed the dowager; "you certainly cannot mean what you say; I cannot believe you will be so very silly, as to refuse an offer so advan-

tageous, so proper in every point of view. You are offended with sir Horace just now, but you will listen to his justification, and when he renews his proposals——”

“ I trust, madam,” replied Miss Lambart, “ sir Horace will have more sense, more pride, than to subject himself to a second rejection ; and as to his offer being advantageous, I am more than satisfied with the wealth I already possess ; and must beg to observe, that if I was ever so poor, I trust I have more principle and delicacy than to make a mercenary marriage.”

“ This is really most surprising,” said the dowager, looking at the baroness, in the expectation that she would advocate the cause of sir Horace Clare ; but finding her silent on the subject, she continued—— “ I never suspected you, Miss Lambart, of being one of those sentimental romantic young ladies who patronize ‘ All for Love,’ which, however charming in theory, makes a deplorable figure in practice. I never could have supposed that, educated as you have been, Miss Lambart, among the noble and high-born, that you would ap-

prove of a husband beneath your own grade, or think without horror of disgracing yourself and connections by contracting a plebeian marriage."

"I trust, madam," replied Ada, urged by the high tone of the dowager to reply with more spirit than usual, "I trust I shall never degrade either myself or my family by a *mésalliance*; on that account, be assured I shall never provoke their censure, or compel them to despise me. But as sir Horace Clare can never inspire me with a sentiment beyond friendship, I again repeat, I will never receive his addresses."

"Ridiculous!" resumed the dowager; "this is the very essence of folly; who ever heard of a well-bred young lady of rank supposing it was necessary to feel more than friendship for the person to whom she gives her hand? The certainty of mutual advantage; and the approval of friends, have always been considered quite sufficient."

"My conscience would consider much more deeply an affair of such importance: I should think it necessary to love, respect,

and confide in my husband, to look up to him as my protector and adviser, from whom I must derive honour and happiness, one in whom I could trust——”

“To rock the cradle, and help to nurse the children,” interrupted the dowager, laughing, to conceal her displeasure. “That blush, my love, makes you more beautiful than ever. But do have the goodness to tell me, where do you expect to meet this *rara avis*, this phoenix? In what far-distant land is he to be found? for among the sons of Erin it would be lost time to seek him.”

“I hope not,” returned Miss Lambart, “for the sake of other females; for myself, I have made up my mind to enter into no engagement till I am of age; and if I do not then receive an offer, such as my principles will allow me to accept, I will contentedly remain in a state of celibacy.”

“And allow your estates to devolve on the son of Charlotte Obrien,” said the dowager, in a tone of mingled rage and vexation; “the bare idea of such an event is enough to turn my brain! You, my dear madam,” continued she, addressing

herself to the baroness, "you have much more influence over the mind of Miss Lambart than I have, and I will leave you to convince her that there is a duty she owes to her family—a necessity for her marrying, that her wealth may enrich her own immediate descendants, and not fall into the possession of the spurious offspring of a woman of equivocal character; for in that light all sensible persons must view Charlotte O'Brien, who contracted an illegal marriage with a minor, an unthinking boy, who was blinded by her arts to the imprudent step he was taking, a step which has entailed disgrace upon himself, and made me lament the hour that saw me a mother."

Having dried up the tears that indignation and mortified pride forced to her eyes, the dowager again spoke of sir Horace Clare, and begged the baroness to recollect his personal merits, and how very suitable a match he would be for Miss Lambart, who was prejudiced against him from misrepresentation.—"I am certain," continued she, "sir Horace is very earnestly and seriously attached to Miss Lambart; I leave

you, dear madam, to intercede for him ; and with such an advocate, I have no doubt but he may look forward to the completion of his wishes."

The dowager countess having left the room, Ada gave way to the emotion she had suppressed in her presence ; she wept bitterly, at the conviction that the dowager urged the suit of sir Horace Clare, not out of regard for her happiness and advantage, nor out of friendship for him, but from an implacable and obstinate spirit, to revenge herself on her son, whose marriage her patrician pride could not forgive ; she wept also the consciousness of having no heart to bestow. In the agony of her feelings, she was about to disclose to the baroness the secret sorrow that preyed upon her spirits, that robbed her cheek of its bloom, and caused the determination never to become a wife, unless her hand should be asked by him whose image was indelibly impressed on her heart ; and this was a hope too improbable to be encouraged. But the necessity of imparting this painful secret was removed, by her venerable friend tenderly kissing her cheek, and say-

ing soothingly—"Do not weep, my Ada, for you have nothing to apprehend from my advice, or solicitation on the part of sir Horace Clare; he may not be the seducer or deceiver of Miss Ogle—for both their sakes I sincerely hope he is not; under present circumstances, I highly approve your rejecting his addresses; and be assured, if you cannot entertain for him the sentiments that can alone render the marriage state happy, if you really cannot religiously promise to love, honour, and obey him, I should think I committed a sin of the greatest enormity, to persuade you, at any future time, to become his wife. I perfectly agree with you, my Ada, that you are yet too young to take upon you the important duties of matrimony, which ought not to be entered upon, without taking time to investigate thoroughly the principles, temper, and habits, of the person in whose keeping you are to place your temporal, perhaps eternal felicity. And now, my beloved child, wipe away your tears, and cheer me with one of your sunny smiles; for remember, though you

may be urged and persuaded, you cannot be compelled to become a wife, without your own consent being first obtained."

But too deeply sorrowful and depressed to smile, Ada threw her arms round the neck of the baroness, and wept with more violence, till the paroxysm of grief being past, she wished she had been born a peasant—"I might, in that humble sphere, have been permitted to pass my life in peace, in conformity with my own wishes. I see no purpose my wealth is to answer, except that of making me unhappy."

"Be not ungrateful to Providence, my child," replied the baroness; "wealth has been bestowed upon you for the best and most gracious purposes, to enable you to make others happy, to banish discontent, to relieve the sick and the necessitous, to assist industry, and enable those who have unhappily gone astray, to return to the paths of virtue; these, my Ada, are the uses of wealth, and may Heaven, in its wisdom and mercy, dispose your heart to make a proper use of the talent committed to your charge, that at the great day of account, it may be said to you, '*well done*,'

thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

To this pious prayer the heart of Ada responded "Amen."

"As to living in conformity with your own will, my child, there is no person has power to prevent your doing so. By the will of your mother, at the age of nineteen you are mistress of your fortune and actions."

"For that I am most thankful," said Ada, raising her glittering eyes to the face of the baroness; "but before that period, I foresee I shall be exposed to much annoyance from persuasion and advice; I am certain to incur much displeasure."

"Not from me," replied the baroness; "no. Heaven forbid that ever your lips should profane a sacred engagement, by uttering vows your heart refused to ratify."

Ada thought she was able to contend with the arguments, and oppose the advice of the dowager countess of Vandeleur, because she was certain that all her opinions and wishes were selfish, and tended to the gratification of her ambi-

tion or revenge. But had the baroness, whom she loved and respected, who had always treated her with the tenderness of a parent, had she advised or persuaded to a measure, ever so repugnant to her own wishes, she felt that duty would have obliged her to comply, even at the hazard of devoting herself to misery. Relieved from this apprehension, Ada gratefully pressed the hand of her revered friend to her lips, and smiling through her tears, retired, at the suggestion of the baroness, to write a polite but positive rejection of sir Horace Clare's proposals.

The chaise which conveyed lady Ogle and her daughter from Claremount had scarcely passed through the gates, when Miss Lambart's rejection of his suit was placed in the hand of sir Horace. Passing through a French window into a shrubbery, he hastily threw himself on a rustic seat, and tore the letter open, with unsteady fingers and a palpitating heart. Having cast his eyes over it, and ascertained the disappointment of his hopes, he execrated the plotting lady Ogle and her artful daughter, believing that he owed

the refusal of Miss Lambart solely to their machinations.

While leaning his throbbing temples against a tree, and experiencing all the misery of mortification, regret, and indignation, he was accosted by the dowager countess of Vandeleur, who having seen the delivery of the letter, and guessing its contents, had followed to console him. Seating herself beside him, she laughed at his dejection, told him he was a novice in the ways of women, not to perceive that Miss Lambart's refusal was nothing more than female etiquette, resulting from delicacy, respecting his late adventure in the picture-gallery. -

"Name it not, madam, I beseech you," said sir Horace; "I shall hate the place as long as I live."

"It is a most delightful place," replied the dowager, "and you will yet return to it with your former feelings of pleasure; nor need the recollection of what occurred there, prevent you from renewing your proposals to Miss Lambart, at a future and more favourable time, of which you

must avail yourself in the winter, when you meet at Dublin."

"Alas! I fear——"

"Fear nothing," continued the dowager, "and hope every thing; '*for if you dare not hope, you do not love.*' Come, come, sir Horace, away with those dismal looks, and take courage; depend upon me to advocate your cause; the baroness, I am assured, looks on you with a favourable eye: Miss Lambart has, I am certain, no dislike to your person."

"If I were only sure of that," said sir Horace, "I might believe it possible to win her."

"It is possible," resumed the dowager, "she will be won; I am your friend, and will exert all my rhetoric in your behalf. Most young men think too well of themselves, but you, sir Horace, verge to the opposite extreme; you have too humble an opinion of your person and merits: once again I tell you, take courage, wait patiently till you meet at Dublin, then renew your offers, and my life upon it, you will find Miss Lambart may be wooed, and

will be won. ‘*Hope springs eternal in the human breast.*’

Sir Horace listened, believed, and was consoled.

“That is,” continued the dowager, “if no suit is commenced against you for breach of marriage by Miss Ogle.”

“She will not, I solemnly swear she cannot,” replied sir Horace.

“There is no doubt then of your success.”

Sir Horace, in the transport of revived hope, raised the hand of the dowager to his lips, and warmly and repeatedly kissed it.

“Hold, hold, young man!” exclaimed the dowager, “you mistake; release my hand, and recollect it is not me you are in love with.”

“You are a most lovely woman,” said sir Horace; “you are——”

“Every thing that is charming, no doubt,” replied the dowager, smiling; “I thank you for your compliment, sir Horace, which, if Miss Lambert heard you utter, it is probable she might be a little jealous.”

“ Oh that she were,” said sir Horace, “ for jealousy is a strong proof of love.”

“ Not always,” thought the more experienced dowager, who knew that pride excited jealousy as strong and as frequently as love; but not considering it necessary to enlighten sir Horace, she contented herself with advising him to destroy Miss Lambart’s letter, and forgetting her rejection, to wait till a favourable opportunity occurred of renewing his suit. Repeating her promise to forward his wishes with all her influence, she left him to his reflections, which were not altogether tranquil or pleasant, though she had assured him that by perseverance he might obtain the prize he sought—the estimable heart of the young and lovely Ada.

But during her stay at Claremount, Miss Lambart’s behaviour to him was much more distant than it had been before his declaration of love; she studiously avoided being left alone with him, and, contrary to a previously-concerted plan, that his Sea Nymph should convey herself and party to Dublin, the baroness, on pretence of dreading to encounter a storm at

sea, it being near the equinox, when rough gales might be expected, apologized for changing her mind, by pleading her increasing infirmities and advanced age, which made her weak and timid, and prefer travelling by land;—for if overtaken by a tempest, she could then remain safely at an inn, till a favourable change in the weather enabled her to pursue her journey.

Sir Horace Clare knew that his Sea Nymph was strongly built, and purposely constructed for swift sailing; but he also knew that he had no control over the elements; he could not command the wind to be still, or the sea to restrain the rough motion of its swelling billows; he was therefore obliged to acquiesce in the decision of the baroness, though it was an unexpected disappointment.

Lady Clare, with the fond partiality of a mother for a really handsome and noble-minded son, believed that the refusal of Miss Lambart, and the sudden resolve of the baroness Wandesford to depart, were solely occasioned by the base and indelicate accusations and assertions of lady Ogle and her daughter; but encouraged by the

dowager countess of Vandeleur to expect that a short time must expose the wickedness of lady Ogle, and remove all prejudice against the morality of sir Horace, she bade them farewell, not without regret, with feelings of perfect esteem, and a mental prayer that their friendship might be renewed under happier auspices.

The unassuming propriety of Miss Lambart's behaviour to all persons and on all occasions, together with her beauty, elegance, and attainments, had won the affections of lady Clare; and when she bade her farewell, it was with a warm hope that before another year elapsed, she should welcome her again to Claremount, the happy bride of her beloved son.

Lord Neagle's heart had once felt the influence of Miss Lambart's charms, but he was then too poor to aspire to her hand; and understanding she was engaged to her cousin, lord Conway, a report the countess his mother had spread 'abroad, to keep off other suitors, he saw the madness of encouraging a hopeless passion; and listening to the advice of reason, he struggled, and found that love was to be conquered

and expelled from a heart determined to resist ; and having himself become sensible of a second love, he laughed at sir Horace Clare's declaration, that if he did not obtain the hand of Miss Lambart, he would never marry, for it would be impossible that he should ever love another.

" No," said sir Horace, sighing, and kissing some faded flowers that had dropped from her bosom, " no, I will never marry if I cannot obtain that angel ; and when it pleases Heaven to remove my mother, I will devote myself to the sea ; I will never again bestow a thought on woman."

" Make no rash vows, for you will assuredly break them," replied lord Neagle. " Miss Lambart is lovely and amiable ; but in justice to the sex, I must acknowledge there are many others, equally worthy to be admired and loved, and I shall yet see you a convert to my opinion. But see, the ladies are waiting for us ; come, come, mount your horse, and let us away."

The day at length arrived—the day so much wished for by his countess, when the young earl of Vandeleur attained his

one and twentieth year ; to celebrate which, a crowd of guests had arrived, and preparations had been made on a grand scale at Doneraile Castle. As far as the domain of the earl extended, every thing wore the appearance of rejoicing ; the peasants, decorated with white favours, were seen feasting and dancing under the trees in the park ; and while shouts of “ Long life to the earl and countess of Vandeleur,” rose on the air, the merry ringing of bells, the firing of cannon, and the music of various instruments, mingled with the joyous voices of the assembled throng.

But while every thing within and without the castle exhibited magnificence, gaiety, and splendour—while the countess, all smiles and satisfaction, exulted in the accomplishment of her ambitious wishes, hailed the day in which she was publicly to receive the hand of Alfred, and be indisputably confirmed in the right to share in his title and fortune, a cloud hung on his brow ; he took no pleasure in the congratulations that were poured upon him, and would much sooner have been chief mourner at her funeral, than renew his

vows to her at the altar; for, from the depth of his heart, he despised her, and execrated his own folly, that had bound a chain round him, that might possibly confine him all his life. But the hour had arrived, when he must either fulfil the decree of his father, or reduce himself to poverty; considering the latter the greater evil of the two, he constrained himself to pronounce the vows which he resolved should never fetter his inclinations, and the crafty Charlotte O'Brien became legally his wife.

At the same time, Miss Desmond gave her hand at the hymeneal altar, to Cyril Percy, esq. in utter contradiction to the will of her father, and contempt of the advice of lady Desmond, who, having heard some unfavourable reports of Mr. Percy, had written, to warn her against uniting herself to an atheist and a gambler; but Mr. Percy's professions and persuasions made her look upon him as injured by misrepresentation, and rendered her deaf to the entreaties, and regardless of the tears, of her sister, whose influence he had dreaded, being aware of the volatile, and somewhat capricious disposition of the young

lady, with whose fortune he was deeply enamoured. But without being so desperately in love as to have broken her heart, or pined herself into a consumption, had he changed his mind, and forsaken her, Miss Desmond was obstinately determined to marry him, if it was only to vex her father, who, after remaining a widower so many years, had secretly disposed of his hand to the honourable Mrs. Chatterton, a woman who had always been her aversion.

Emily Desmond had been frequently shocked at the openly avowed infidelity of Mr. Percy's opinions; she had frequently and earnestly entreated her gay unthinking sister not to encourage his addresses: she had endeavoured to convince her that no dependance was to be placed on the affection or promises of a man, who spoke with contempt of religion, and had no belief in a state of future rewards and punishments.—“Mr. Percy avowedly denies the influence of conscience,” said Emily, “therefore will not be constrained from following his own inclinations, even at the sacrifice of your happiness.”

Miss Desmond laughed, and ridiculed

the apprehensions of Emily—declared she hated serious men, who preached like Methodists—bade Emily be careful in choosing a husband for herself, and leave her to keep guard over her own happiness.

Most reluctantly Emily officiated as one of her sister's bridesmaids; her look of inquietude, the tears she could not restrain, convinced the profligate Percy that her sentiments respecting him remained unchanged; and even at the moment of placing the ring on the finger of her sister, he mentally swore to revenge the interference that had been offered by the gentle amiable girl, to deter the companion of her childhood, her beloved and only sister, from becoming his wife.

But the irrevocable vow was pronounced—the benediction was bestowed, while Emily foresaw the happiness that sparkled in the eyes of the bride would wane, if not depart, with the first noon of her marriage, and be succeeded by bitter and lasting repentance.

Not was Emily Desmond the only regretful and unhappy spectator of these marriages; for among the joyous volun-

teers that formed a gorgeous phalanx round the richly-decorated altar, stood Wilmot Darel, pale as the marble monument on which he leaned, his face presenting a strong and ghastly contrast to the vivid scarlet of his regimentals; the rapid changes of his countenance, the wildness of his eyes, the agitation of his frame—had not escaped the observation of the persons who stood near him. To their repeated inquiries, he had answered he was quite well; but when he attempted to congratulate the earl and countess of Vandeleur on their marriage, the effort was too painful—his voice faltered—the wish for their happiness would not pass his quivering lips—he uttered a low stifled groan—and fell, as was then believed, a corpse at their feet.

This was a terrific occurrence; death, at all times awful, appeared trebly so at such a time of rejoicing. The gay cavalcade rushed from the chapel, shocked and dismayed, and with far less order than they had entered: but there was one among the young and lovely who remained—it was Emily Desmond; her trembling limbs had

refused to support her from the scene of terror. As she leaned for support on the rails that enclosed the altar, she forgot it was her sister's bridal day—she forgot the world, and that she was incurring its censure by remaining, when all her friends had fled. Alas for Emily! she felt that she loved Wilmot Darel, and that he had died a sudden unprepared death. While her eyes were fixed on the pale form that lay stretched before her, she heard some one say, "Life is not extinct; there is still motion about the heart." In an instant Emily was beside the unfortunate young man, chafing his temples and his hands, and supporting his head on her knees. In this position, and thus employed, she was found by the earl of Vandeleur, Mr. Percy, and captain Langrish, who had returned, after seeing the ladies in safety, to give orders respecting the disposal of the corpse, the removal of which to the castle had been considered improper at that time, when the sight of death, and preparations for a funeral, might throw a damp upon the spirits of those who had assembled for

purposes of mirth and festivity, and whose nerves were too delicate to endure having a *memento mori* set before them, and to become mourners, at a moment when they intended to rejoice.

When raised from the pavement, the unhappy young man opened his eyes, and looking wildly at the earl of Vandeleur, murmured—"She is not to blame. What has happened to me?"

Captain Langrish had assisted Emily to rise from her kneeling posture, who seeing that Darel was recovering from the syncope that had so alarmed her, she hastened from the chapel, blushing at her own temerity, that had led her to quit the side of her sister, and fearing that her humanity would expose her to much unpleasant raillery, and betray the secret of her partiality for Wilmot Darel—a weakness she wished to conceal, if it were possible, even from herself, because she was but too certain he had most improperly and unworthily placed his affections on an object forbidden by religion, honour, and gratitude.

When Darel was removed, by order of

the earl of Vandeleur, from the chapel to his own apartment in the castle, Percy, seeming to recover from a musing fit, said —“ It is wonderful how blind some men are to what is passing round them, and to what it particularly concerns them to know.”

“ To what do you allude ?” asked Langrish ; “ not to any thing, I suppose, that concerns yourself, for when that is the case, you are always on the alert.”

“ True,” replied Percy ; “ I, a man that had a ruined fortune to repair, was necessitated to be watchful and observant ; but you, who have not spirit to lose, are not so attentive to win a fortune.

“ Do you mean that for a compliment ?” asked captain Langrish.

“ That is as you feel disposed to take it,” replied Percy.

“ At any rate, I am disposed to be pleased that you have been observant to good purpose, as far as concerns yourself, and shall be glad to learn in what instance I have been blind. I am the person to whom you allude ?”

“ I allude to your feelings with respect

to Emily Desmond," returned Percy, "whom any one with half an eye may see is sick for love of the sentimental Darel. Why should you be acting Corydon to such an insensible Pastora, who sighs for another, while you sigh for her, when your attentions would be favourably received by one quite as fair, perhaps not quite so rich? but that is of no consequence to you, who have money enough."

"Why I confess," said Langrish, "Miss Emily Desmond has never encouraged me to hope a return of regard."

"She has no heart, no eyes, but for Wilnot Darel: you are neither a poet, nor a reader of poetry," resumed Percy, "and stand no chance with a romantic young girl, who prefers moonlight to a well-lit ball-room, the fresh scent of early violets to the fashionable perfume of attur gul, and the serenade of nightingales to the music of a first-rate composer. But what think you of Miss Byron? lively and animated—no languish—no sickly sentiment about her."

"I think her a very fine girl," replied

captain Langrish, "only rather too strong a touch of the brogue."

"She is young, and that will wear off," said Percy: "as a friend, I advise you to turn your attention to her, who, I am certain, will not reject your addresses."

"You are certain?"

"Yes, I am certain; I have watched her looks, and I have heard her express herself in favour of your person."

"I wonder I should not have observed."

"You were too much engaged with Emily Desmond," resumed Percy; "but it is now evident you have no chance of succeeding there, for her conduct this morning has evidently shewn what her sister and myself have long suspected, her passion for Wilmot Darel."

"I shall not be so unpolite as to censure the young lady's taste, if she prefers him," replied captain Langrish; "she has a right to please herself—I wish them happy together, with all my soul; and if I thought you were not jesting about Miss Byron, I would try to overcome my objections to her brogue."

"I am not jesting, on my honour: sing

to her—"Come with me, Alice, to the fair," and she will be ready to go with you to church, whenever you ask the question."

"Miss Byron is a devilish pretty girl!" said Langrish; "she has a pair of sparkling black eyes, pretty pouting lips, red as a ripe cherry; a neat little foot and ankle."

"And best of all, Oscar," said the earl of Vandeleur, who had returned from seeing Darrel to his chamber, and had left the family surgeon with him—"best of all, Miss Byron has a handsome fortune; she has the reputation too of being good-tempered; a most desirable qualification in a wife: if you intend to pay your addresses there, you have my good wishes for your success with pretty Miss Byron."

"Thank you, thank you. If Emily Desmond has bestowed her heart on Darrel, I must say he is a fortunate fellow, for she is a sweet interesting girl."

"Rather too grave for my taste," said Percy; "but let us go; our brides will complain of our neglect."

"Yours may, perhaps," replied the earl; "mine will not, I am certain, lament, or chide my absence."

"By Jove!" exclaimed captain Langrish, "I have made up my mind to address Miss Byron——"

"By Cupid, you mean," interrupted the earl; "he is the presiding god in love affairs."

"Well, by Jove, or by Cupid, it matters not to me which, yonder in the balcony stands Miss Byron. See, she has plucked a white moss rose, and is placing it in her bosom."

"That white rose is an omen of good luck," observed Percy.

"I hope so," replied Langrish; "see! she looks up, and smiles so invitingly, that I must absolutely go."

"And if you really like her well enough to marry her, do not stand shilly-shally," resumed Percy, "but pop the question at once."

"That, I fear, will be acting too precipitately," returned the captain.

"Not at all, my friend—not at all," rejoined the earl; "the women love a bold suitor—one who is resolute to succeed. Take my advice, Oscar; distance those two fops, Ogle and Carrick, who are buzzing

their nonsense in her ears from morning till night; it will be a meritorious act to rescue the poor girl from their annoyance."

"See," said Langrish, "she has plucked another rose, and I suppose Carrick is asking for it: if she gives it to him, that shall decide me not to speak to her. Hurrah! the day is my own; she turns from him, and holds the rose towards me. Faith, I am inclined to believe it is a lucky omen."

"Away then, and make her an offer at once," said lord Vandeleur; "speak boldly, and the prize is won."

After captain Langrish departed, the earl, passing his arm through Percy's, said—"You need not be in such haste; your lady bride—I will not say your love, because I know you too well to believe that you have married from any such silly motive—but let that remain a secret till she discovers it—your lady is in her sister's apartment, holding volatiles to her nose; for Darel's situation has, it seems, affected her nerves."

"And her head also, which is equally weak with her nerves," replied Percy, with

a sneer, "or she would never have exposed herself so ridiculously about him."

"I have really a friendship for Darel," resumed the earl; "and if Emily Desmond approved him, I see no objection to the match. His brother has led a very free life, and is in bad health; should he die, the estate will be Wilmot's; a little economy and retrenchment would pay off the mortgages that at present entumber it, and then, in point of family and fortune, there could be no objection."

"Except the trifling impediment of Darel's passion for another person," observed Percy.

"He is too poor to indulge in the romantic folly of love," resumed lord Vandeleur; "and if Miss Desmond is willing to take him for better for worse, I will have an eye to his promotion."

"Extremely kind and friendly of you," said Percy; "but perhaps you will not feel so warmly towards him, or think him so deserving of your interest, when you learn on whom he has placed his affections."

"On my mother, I hope," replied the

earl; "such a passion is not impossible; for let me tell you, the countess dowager of Vandeleur is still a fine woman, and has fascinating manners, when she condescends to make herself agreeable. Well, if he has fallen in love in that quarter, I have not the least objection to call him papa."

"You shoot wide of the mark," said Percy, affecting to look grave.

"Surely he is not in love with Miss Lambart; it is possible he might succeed there; for they are congenial spirits, attached to the same pursuits—poetry, music; if he loves there, I fear I could not forgive him. No reply! Why do you not speak, and put an end to this painful suspense? I see by your look it is her, for I have no sister—no other cousin for him to fall in love with."

"But you have a still nearer connection," returned Percy; "you have a wife."

"Ha, ha, ha, ha! This is a most unexpected discovery," said the earl, laughing heartily.

Well as Percy thought he knew the heart of the earl, he was not prepared to find it so perfectly callous, and, with a

look of surprise, he asked—"Are you not offended at his presumption?—are you not shocked at his ingratitude?"

"No, I am neither shocked nor offended," replied the earl; "on the contrary, I am heartily sorry for the poor fellow, for his, I am certain, is a hopeless passion; the countess of Vandeleur will never reward it with more than a smile, or permission to kiss her hand; she loves flattery, has an insatiable appetite for admiration; but she is too cold, too proud, too cunning, to commit a weakness in favour of any man breathing; she has too much at stake to be found tripping; she has laboured hard, and endured not a little, to attain her present elevation, from which nothing but criminal unfaithfulness can remove her. No, no—I am sensible our dislike is mutual; but she is too fond of her high state, to part with it for '*light-winged toys of feathered Cupid*;' therefore you see, Percy, I have no reason to be jealous; and as to offended, I have suffered from the wiles of the Circe, and pity the infatuation of Darel, and wish, from the esteem I bear him, she had cho-

sen some other person to cast her spells upon."

With all his knowledge of human nature, and experience in the ways of mankind, Percy was completely disappointed by the perfect *nonchalance* with which the earl of Vandeleur had listened to the tale of Darel's love for the countess. He had expected to see him excited to rage and resentment, and instead of pitying Darel, disclaiming all further interest in his affairs, and expelling him the castle; and when it is remembered that this was Percy's wedding-day—that his bride was young, handsome, and rich—and that she had married him in opposition to the wishes and advice of her family, it will seem almost incredible that his thoughts should be wandering from his new-made bride, to whom he owed so much gratitude, and whom he had just made a solemn and sacred promise to love and cherish, till death should ~~should~~ part, or that he should feel any sentiment but that of goodwill towards a person of the amiable mind and gentlemanly manners of Wilmot Darel; but Percy had been struck with the beauty

of lady Vandeleur, when he first beheld her, and having a light and profligate opinion of female virtue, he believed she would be easily persuaded to accept from another the regard and attention her husband did not even affect to pay her: but to secure a rich wife was just then of vital importance to Percy, who had actually run away from his creditors, whom he had too often deceived, to hope for any lenity at their hands, should they discover him before he had obtained the means of silencing their clamorous demands. Miss Desmond was volatile, unthinking, and sufficiently rich; he was handsome, elegant in his manners, witty in conversation, flattered agreeably; and being externally unobjectionable, she took his mind and principles on his own recommendation.

Percy, during his very short courtship of Miss Desmond, had confined his admiration of lady Vandeleur to his own bosom; for he determined no imprudence on his part should induce Miss Desmond to withdraw her promise to be his: but while he thought the commencement of an intrigue was to be avoided till the nuptial

benediction had given him a right to laugh at and despise complaints and remonstrances, he beheld, with envy and resentment, the very marked partiality of the countess for Wilmot Darel, and his devotion to her; if she rode, Darel was at her side—if she danced, he was her partner—if she touched the keys of the instrument, he turned the leaves of the music-book. This preference rankled in the heart of Percy; and he had frequently hinted to the earl the obvious esteem in which lady Vandeleur and Mr. Darel held each other; but he was either blind, or too much engaged in flirting with one of her ladyship's dear friends—a young French widow—to trouble himself in what way she amused herself, or who she chose for her *cavaliere servante*.

Emily Desmond had never liked Mr. Percy; she had always treated him with distance and reserve; her sister too had weakly told him, that Emily had urged her not to marry him, and by no means to give up the whole of her fortune to him, but to have a part of it settled on herself, beyond her own power to dispose of du-

ring her life. For this prudent counsel, Percy hated Emily; he saw her partiality for Darel, and to afflict and distress her, he continually spoke, in terms that meant more than met the ear, of his Platonic love for the countess of Vandeleur.

Percy was certain that Emily would never voluntarily bestow any part of her fortune upon him; and he hated Darel too much, to desire it should enrich his fallen house; he beheld, with the malignant exultation of a demon, the certain misery and separation of two hearts, that, under more fortunate circumstances, might have been united in bonds of pure and lasting affection.

The fainting of Darel, after witnessing the marriage of the countess, afforded an opportunity for opening the eyes of the earl, which Percy did not let slip. Finding him careless of who made love to his wife, and inclined to consider Darel a victim, rather than an aggressor, he resolved to try whether he could not turn the arts of the enchantress upon herself, and subdue that virtue which the earl her

husband believed impregnable, guarded as it was by pride and self-interest.

“ Miss Desmond has married, and made me master of her fortune, reserving to herself no share of it, confiding, as she says, in my affection and honour—and why? not because she had any knowledge of my disposition or character, but out of opposition to her family, to shew them she was out of their control, and would act in all things as she pleased, and because I flattered her vanity, by affecting to admire the charms and graces she never possessed. Poor silly thing! she believes herself in love with me,” said Percy, exulting in the accomplishment of his schemes; “ but how long, I wonder, will this whim, this fancy of hers last, after I drop the lover and assume the husband? I fear me she will not turn a deaf ear to the man who shall offer to console her for my dereliction. I will keep a watchful eye upon her conduct—if I discover her bestowing favours on another, a divorce follows, and I am free and rich; for having no settlement, she can make no claim upon me, and must cast herself upon the generosity of her pa-

ramour, or solicit a maintenance from the sentimental Emily, who will perhaps consider it her duty to receive, and endeavour to reclaim, her erring sister." Such were the thoughts of the libertine Percy, even on his wedding day.

Captain Langrish entered the balcony, and found sir Harry Ogle on his knees to Miss Byron, entreating her to bestow on him the white moss-rose she had refused lord Carrick. Sir Harry was making a speech on the young lady's beauty, which he thought the very perfection of eloquence. He protested her hand was much whiter than the rose she held, and that he should be the most enviable of mortals, if she would permit him to wear the flower in his bosom, and allow him to consider it an earnest of her approval of the devotion which, kneeling at her feet, he presumed to offer her.

"*Bravo, bravissimo! encore, encore!*" exclaimed captain Langrish, with a shout in the ear of the little baronet, that made him start, and laid him sprawling at the feet of Miss Byron, who, though she joined in the laugh occasioned by the lu-

dicrous prostration of the little baronet, protested she was excessively angry with captain Langrish, for interrupting the pleasure she received from hearing herself flattered, and complimented so highly.

Sir Harry Ogle rose from the floor, rubbing his forehead, which was slightly scratched; to hide which Miss Byron offered him some court-plaister, which he refused, with an air of displeasure, saying —“ I am extremely hurt, ma'am.”

“ Bless me! I hope not. Where are you hurt, sir Harry?”

“ Wounded through the heart, I dare say: there the hurt lies—does it not?” asked captain Langrish.

“ Really, captain Langrish, I consider your behaviour very——”

“ Very what?” demanded Langrish.

“ Very unfriendly, very extraordinary, very much so indeed—and I must insist ——”

“ On what, sir Harry,” asked the incorrigible Langrish, “ on what do you insist?”

“ On being allowed to pass, that I may repair the disorder of my dress, and make

myself fit to join the ladies in the drawing-room."

"As quickly as you please," returned captain Langrish, making way for him to pass; "I have no wish, I give you my word, to impede your exit."

"I declare, captain Langrish," said Miss Byron, "you have frightened the poor little baronet out——"

"Of the presumptuous hope of rendering himself agreeable to you, Miss Byron."

"Why, suppose I have taken a fancy to him?"

"That is a fancy I can never believe."

"And why not?"

"Because I think you have a better taste, and have sense enough to prefer a man to a monkey."

"In that thought you do me justice."

"And in every other; but I cannot flatter, cringe, and fawn, like Carrick and Ogle; I can only express the feelings of my heart, and say, in plain language—I love you!"

Miss Byron cast down her eyes and blushed.

"I am a man of few words and sincere

heart—will you accept it, and give me yours in return?”

“That is a requisition,” replied Miss Byron, smiling, “that requires to be well considered. I do not approve of hasty promises, for they are too frequently followed by repentance.”

“But bid me hope.”

“I do not bid you despair: frankly, I have no dislike to your person or manners, captain Langrish; but I have a dear and respected mother, whose approbation is, in all things, necessary to my happiness; I will consult her, and if she approves——”

“You will be mine?”

The reply of Miss Byron I leave my readers to suppose; doubtless it was not unfavourable, for at dinner lord Carrick and sir Harry Ogle had the mortification to see the white moss-rose they had so earnestly solicited, grace the button-hole of captain Langrish.

Percy took an opportunity, after the ladies retired, to ask captain Langrish what success he had met with the pretty Byron?

“The question is premature,” replied

he; "I have barely had time to offer her my addresses."

"Which she has not refused. The prize will be yours, Oscar, for you wear in your bosom the omen of success—the white moss-rose."

CHAP. IV.

————— As in the sweetest bud
The eating canker dwells, so eating love
Inhabits in the finest wits of all. •

————— As the most forward bud
Is eaten by the canker, ere it blow,
Even so the young and tender wit
Is turn'd to folly; blooming in the bud,
Losing its verdure even in the prime,
And all the fair effects of future hope.

—————
And why not death, rather than living torture
To die, is to be banish'd from myself.

————— Banish'd from her, •
Is self from self, a deadly banishment!
Unless I look upon her in the day,
There is no day for me to look upon.
Love hath chas'd sleep from my enthralled eyes,
And made them watchers of mine own heart's wrong.

The Gentlemen of Verona.

FOR a few days Wilmot Darel was too deeply affected in mind and body to quit

his chamber, and during this period of suffering, his conscience more loudly than ever upbraided him with pusillanimous weakness, with criminality, and base ingratitude, in allowing his heart to cherish a passion for his friend's wife; continually it asked him what he proposed to himself, by lingering in the palace of the enchantress, whose spells were every hour growing more potent, which if not suddenly broken, would end in the worst and most terrible of all deaths—suicide.—“ I will avoid this perdition,” said Darel, perturbedly pacing his chamber; “ I will be gone; I will follow the counsel of reason; I will avoid this beauteous enslaver of my peace, till I have obtained fortitude to behold her charms without emotion, without envying their possession to him who claims my gratitude and my respect.”

Nerved with this resolution, Mr. Darel again joined the bridal party, who having congratulated him on his recovery, returned to their own frivolous amusements, leaving him to entertain himself in the way most agreeable to his taste.

“ And this is the world,” thought Wil-

not, "and these cold heartless beings the persons I so ardently longed to mingle with! I am among them an unregarded atom, that may sink or swim upon the stream of life, and excite neither pleasure or pain in the breast of any: yet surely," thought he, gazing on the countess of Vandeleur, "she must have a heart; nature cannot have left that lovely creature without affections. But to me it matters not; her hand is given; her vows are plighted to another, and I must forget, must banish her from my memory."

But while thus resolving, his eyes rested on the countess with intense admiration; to him she appeared fairest among the fair, excelling all in grace and elegance; and it was with wonder he observed the undisguised indifference with which her husband treated her, and how openly he devoted himself to madame Belvoir, who, careless of appearances, seemed to consider herself at liberty to flirt with him, though the husband of another, and that other her dear friend. Nor did this conduct seem at all to depress the spirits of the countess, or appear to lessen her cordiality to the

gay widow. To Wilmot Darel, new to the world, and fashionable manners, this was astonishing, and he could by no means reconcile such conduct with his own notions of morality, of female delicacy, and of matrimonial duties.

Emily Desmond and Wilmot Darel had secret sorrows, that prevented them from joining in the thoughtless merriment of those around them, and they were the only persons who felt shocked at the levity of the Frenchwoman, and the *nonchalance* of the countess. To Darel's mind, it brought the positive conviction, that no woman loving her husband, could bear with composure the revolt of his affections—to see herself absolutely neglected, and another claiming and receiving his attentions.

Darel was nine fathoms deep in love, but he could not avoid discovering that the principles of the countess Vandeleur were far more lax than was consistent with female delicacy and purity. But what was this to him? His awakened conscience bade him shun the witchery of her beauty: he began to think, being a wife

and a mother, she had acted improperly in urging him to prolong his stay at the castle, in encouraging an intimacy which their very recent acquaintance did not authorize. He severely blamed himself, and he could not altogether exonerate her, for her smiles and her flattery had beguiled him of his reason, and in the wild delirium of love, he had forgotten the claims of honour and gratitude; he had gazed on her beauty, and thought not that its influence would poison his happiness, and destroy his peace.

Convinced that he had been acting a dishonourable part, Dard no longer pressed forward to secure a place by the side of the countess: he resolved to deny himself the felicity of touching her hand—to fly the fascination of her smiles; yet his rebellious feelings would not allow him even to converse with another; but withdrawing to a distance, he would stand silent and motionless, endeavouring to think of his forsaken home, and the visit his brother had promised him in the winter. But still his eyes would turn upon the coun-

tess, as if impelled towards her by a power he could not resist. Alas ! there needs no stronger spell than that which love casts round a young and inexperienced heart ; he fancied her restless eye fixed on him, with an inquiry why he had left her ? Again he would believe they confessed reciprocal passion, and invited him to return. ' It was when thus assailed by imagination, his mental tortures were terrible : burning love and youthful inclination urged him to renew his devotion, to yield himself, without farther contest, to what his weak and guilty wishes told him was irremediable, and beyond mortal control.

The earl of Vandeleur had been many times deeply in love ; but the very violence of his passion shortened its date ; satiety or absence always effected his cure. The pretty lively widow Belvoir, who came from Paris on purpose to assist at the reunion of her most dear friend, the countess, though overlooked by him in her own country, had now taken his fancy. and his lordship was too much engaged with this new-formed liaison to bestow much thought on Wilmot Darel, more

than to wish he had placed his regard on Emily Desmond, and to recollect that his leave of absence being nearly expired, he would be obliged to repair to quarters, where it was likely he would soon forget his ill-placed love. Engaged in military duties, and exposed to the raillery of his brother officers, gay spirits,

— While

And so

But to Emily Desmond, when he thanked her for the humane assistance she had rendered to recover him, when he fainted in the chapel, it was evident that his youth had suffered a blight; his peace was gone for ever; she saw that his heart was devoted to an unworthy woman, and that all his faculties were subdued by, and engaged in, a criminal pursuit. Yet his appearance excited her pity; for there was melancholy in his eyes, and mournfulness in the tones of his voice, that greatly affected her sensibility; her own case, she knew, was utterly hopeless; she saw he was lost to her for ever; but she would gladly have endured the anguish that was undermining

her health, could she have placed him securely in the path of honour—could she have preserved him from the remorse that always follows guilt.

Emily, the gentle, amiable Emily, loved the erring, unhappy Darel, and would have sacrificed all but innocence, to save him from the stings of upbraiding conscience; but she was still younger than himself, and would he listen to the warning advice of so juvenile a monitor? Timidity and delicacy put a seal upon her lips, and fervently as she desired to preserve him, she could not even hint at the abyss into which he was falling; but determined not to witness his farther degradation, or her sister's repentance of her hasty marriage, which she was certain would quickly arrive, she declined the invitation of the countess of Vandeleur, to pass the winter with her in Dublin, and Mrs. Percy's desire that she would accompany her to England, whither Mr. Percy's affairs called him, and returned home to the protection of her father, whose naturally irritable temper was not much amended by his own marriage; for so far from

proving a domestic wife, the honourable lady Desmond, as she styled herself, loved company and visiting: she had insisted on changing his servants for her own, who knew her methods, and had been accustomed to prepare for and wait upon persons of consequence and fashion. The hunting and shooting amusements of sir Hector, she declared brutish and vulgar; she quarrelled with his dress, and refused to admit his former associates to her table; and so completely denied him any share of command in his own house, that he rejoiced in the return of Emily, that he might have some one to appeal to, against the encroachments and tyranny of his wife. Lady Desmond also rejoiced: for she knew that a young girl, with a large fortune, was an attraction that would always fill her rooms, when she chose to give a ball or a concert.

But though Emily lamented the disappointment her father experienced in his second marriage, she avoided interfering in his domestic disputes. Her health and spirits, too, were so bad, that she could take no part in lady Desmond's entertain-

ments, and she remained, for the most part of every day, secluded in her own apartment, where she could, undisturbed, weep for the errors of Wilmot Darel,^o lament the fate of her misguided sister, whose name her father had forbid her to mention in his presence, and reflect that, by remaining single, she should always have it in her power to offer her a home, and prevent her from feeling the poverty to which she foresaw the excesses of her husband would reduce her.

Lady Desmond had more than once hinted to sir Hector, her belief that Miss Desmond's illness was nothing more than affectation, and that it was put on just to vex her, to contradict, and oppose her arrangements, to disappoint, and treat her and her friends with disrespect; and if he had the least love for her, he would interfere, and exert the authority of a father.

"So, so, the cloven foot will appear, I perceive," said sir Hector; "you want to drive this poor child from me, as you did her sister."

"Oh you base man! how can you have

the cruelty to lay such a charge to my account? me, an innocent woman! did not I warn and advise her not to marry? did not I write to her, and inform her of the evil reports that I had heard of Percy?"

"And did not she openly declare her aversion of you?" asked sir Hector; "and did not she marry the scoundrel, because she would not subject herself to the whims and impertinence of a stepmother? Yes, yes, she knew you better than I did; she knew there would not be an apartment in the house she could call her own."

"Mighty well, sir Hector; rave away, exhaust your ill-temper."

"My ill-temper! zounds, madam!"

"Fie upon such language, a gentleman would blush to be guilty of the vulgarity of using bad words; but pray, sir Hector, moderate your wrath, for though my nerves are strong enough to bear your boisterous behaviour, your loud tones may terrify your sick daughter, should they reach to her apartment."

"None of your sneers, madam; my daughter has been used to my voice, and

I am sure would sooner hear it at the loudest, than bear the noisy midnight orgies of you and your friends, who have turned my house topsy-turvy; but remember, madam," continued sir Hector, "whether sick or well, Emily Desmond shall never be under your control; the poor child shall not be driven from her father's house, through being compelled to obey, whether agreeable to herself or otherwise, the commands of a domineering stepmother."

"Grant me patience!" exclaimed lady Desmond.

"You have exercised mine," resumed sir Hector, "till it is worn out; you have thwarted, and contradicted, and tormented me, ever since I was fool enough to take you for better for worse."

"I am sure I wish I had never married you," said lady Desmond; "I must have been bewitched to accept an old fox-hunting, ill-bred——"

"I am confoundedly sorry you did," interrupted sir Hector; "but it was because you could get no one else to marry you."

"That is false," replied her ladyship: "sir Harry Ogle was dying for me."

"For your money, you mean: poor little devil, it would have been serviceable to him, who seldom hears the joyful sound of two guineas gingling against each other in his purse. Why the plague did not you marry the little fop? if he had displeased you by objecting to your extravagant whims, you might have shut him up in a bandbox, till he promised to be obedient, or you might have set him on the mantel-piece, among your curiosities; he would have passed with your friends for a pet monkey."

"You are a stupid, rude, ignorant——"

"Not quite so stupid or ignorant as you suppose," interrupted sir Hector: "for take notice, madam, I am going to Limerick, and I expect, at my return, to see all your gimcracks removed from my smoking-room—your boudoir, I think you call it: but if I do not find my easy chair, and all the old furniture replaced, may I be called an ignorant, stupid ass all my life, if I do not make

a bonfire on the lawn of all your toys and trumpery."

With this menace sir Hector departed, leaving lady Desmond not a little chagrined, to find, she had married a man of far different temper to her first husband, the honourable Mr. Chatterton, but obstinately determined not to give up her boudoir, which she saw sir Hector intended to receive his vulgar, smoking, guzzling friends in again, though he knew she detested the smell of tobacco, and how much she liked that apartment, on account of the prospect from the windows. Resolved not to give it up, without she saw sir Hector proceeding to put his menace in execution, she gave no orders about removing the furniture; but ordering her carriage, went to repeat her grievances, and receive condolence and counsel from a vixen acquaintance in the neighbourhood, whose vinegar aspect, and shrill pipe, kept her husband and family in perfect obedience to her will.

Emily had been told by her father that he should dine abroad, but she was not aware of the absence of her ladyship; and

when summoned by the dinner-bell, she was surprised, though not displeased, to find she was to make a solitary meal. Emily had no remembrance of her mother, but she recollected well the affectionate aunt, under whose care her sister and herself had passed their childhood; she sighed to think that indulgent, amiable, and enlightened relation was no more; of her sister she thought with agony, in a far-distant country, without friends, a stranger, entirely at the mercy of a husband, who scoffed at religion, and pursued the gratification of his own will, the indulgence of his own inclinations, even to bringing misery and destruction on others—"But in me," said Emily, "my rash, deluded sister, shall ever find a steady, unchanging friend; together we will mourn our blighted hopes; and though deprived of happiness ourselves, we will endeavour to make others happy."

Invited by the beauty of a bright autumnal evening, Emily had wandered, through paths strewed with fallen leaves, that rustled beneath her light foot, to a steep and romantic eminence, that over-

looked the road by which she knew her father would return from Limerick. Here, seated beside a 'water-fall, she gazed on the flashing waters, as they hurried along a rocky descent, and thought of the beloved infatuated Darel—of the downward course he was pursuing, led on by an *ignis fatuus* love, that would at last plunge him in misery; for his was a mind that passion could not totally subjugate, inebriate, and render blind to the majesty and excellence of virtue; his 'was not an understanding that vice could torpify so thoroughly as to exclude all reflection.—“Alas! deluded youth! you will yet feel, and bitterly deplore, the entanglement into which you have rushed so heedlessly—you will repent the hour you opposed your religious destination’—you will regret the days when you wandered, with an unrepenting conscience, through the woods and shades that surround your deserted home: happy, most happy, had it been for you and me,” said Emily, “had you never felt a desire to mingle with the world—had you devoted yourself to the service of the altar.” Emily raised her tearful eyes to heaven,

and prayed for resignation.—“The inheritance of every child of earth,” said she, “is sorrow: oh may this early disappointment teach me to subdue my weak and erring wishes, and lead me to place my expectations of happiness beyond this transitory life!” The evening was closing in; a bright and solitary star glittered in beautiful loneliness over the waterfall, and warned her of approaching darkness; the wind, too, felt chilly, as it swept past her, and waved the tall grass that grew around. Emily drew her mantle more closely round her, and was rising to depart, when a startling sound met her ear, that made her linger, to ascertain what it meant. As it approached nearer, she plainly heard the loud piercing wail of lamentation that is raised by the Irish peasantry at the sight of death.—“My father comes not,” said Emily; “pray Heaven he may be safe!” The approach of a corpse—the wild spot on which she stood—the duskiness of the hour—all tended to fill her with alarm. She wished to learn for whom the lament was raised, but unable to bear the terror that assailed her, she flew along the paths

that led to her home, and arrived time enough to find her worst fears verified—to see the bloody and disfigured corpse of her father borne into the hall.

It was late the next day when Emily became sensible of her orphan state; for a succession of fainting fits had so confused her memory, that she was only roused to recollection by the noisy grief of lady Desmond, whose vehemence of sorrow greatly astonished the domestics, who had so frequently witnessed the quarrels between herself and sir Hector, and who had so often heard her wish him in his grave:—when living he was a savage—an ill-bred brute; now she wrung her hands, and declared he was the best of men—the kindest and tenderest of husbands, and she could never survive his loss.

The grief of Miss Desmond was not expressed in tears or exclamations—it was deep and silent; her mournful looks, the tremulous tones of her voice, spoke unutterable woe. The disconsolate widow was unable to give any orders respecting the interment of her beloved husband, and the afflicted orphan was necessitated to

ask the assistance of a friend of her father, who, disgusted at the pride and insolence of lady Desmond, had latterly declined calling at the house; but in this emergency, compassion for Emily got the better of his resentment, and contempt of her stepmother; and under the direction of Mr. Kinsale, the remains of sir Hector Desmond were placed in the family vault.

Emily could never bring herself to inquire how her unfortunate father met his death; but her ladyship's feelings could not be satisfied till she learned, that having transacted the business he went upon with his solicitor, he had dined with some friends at an inn, where a dispute arising, about the mettle and speed of their horses, one of the gentlemen offered to lay a hundred pounds that his mare would reach a certain finger-post on the road, ten minutes before sir Hector's hunter. The wager was immediately accepted, and won by sir Hector Desmond, at the expence of his life; for having reached the post, in the endeavour to rein in his horse, he was thrown off, and his skull fractured against a stone.

This dreadful account of her husband's death was given to lady Desmond while his funeral obsequies were performing, and it did not prevent her attending the reading of his will, to which she expected to find herself appointed executrix; but, to her utter astonishment and disappointment, she found that sir Hector had left her very little more than the property that was hers before she married him, and that the bulk of his possessions were bequeathed to his daughter Emily, charged only with payment of a few trifling legacies, no mention whatever being made of Mrs. Percy.

Few women could control their tempers with more skill and cunning than lady Desmond, when she saw the expediency of appearing amiable; but on this occasion it burst all bounds; she looked and raved like a fury, reviling her departed husband in a most indecorous way; thanking fate that she was released from the extreme misery of passing her life with an illiterate, vulgar sot, whom she had no doubt was in a state of intoxication when he died.

"Let us hope not, madam," said the solicitor; "I have transacted business for

“sir Hector Desmond, full thirty years, and I never suspected him of being addicted to drinking.”

“And I much wonder, madam,” rejoined Mr. Kinsale, “that you, who had been sir Hector’s near neighbour for so many years, should have married him, for your intimacy with his family must have given you an insight into his propensities and character.”

“No, sir,” replied her ladyship, “he had the art to conceal his faults from me; if I had suspected how my rest was to have been broken, and my peace destroyed, I should not have made him my choice; but it is necessary to live with people to know them.”

“Not always,” observed the solicitor, dryly; “but we will let the friends of sir Hector Desmond vindicate and do his character justice; our present business is to attend to his testament.”

“He was then proceeding to read a codicil respecting the renewal of leases to certain tenants at the same low rents they then paid.—“And what is all this stuff to me?” said lady Desmond, pushing aside

her chair with such violence, that she almost upset the man of business, who, in catching at his spectacles, which were shook from his nose, threw down a bottle of claret, which running in copious streams from the table, filled the shoes of those who were standing near.

Finding the mansion no longer hers, lady Desmond hastened to pack up her moveables; and without taking any sort of leave of the sorrowing orphan, drove from the gates, wishing she had never entered them, and vowing she would marry again, and speedily, that she might not be addressed by the hated name of Desmond.

Sir Hector had always held Mr. Kinsale in high esteem, not because he was fond of hunting, but because he was a plain, honest, well-meaning man, and him he appointed the guardian and manager of the Desmond estates, should he die before Emily, little more than eighteen, came of age. Mr. Kinsale professed little, but he proved himself, at this distressing period, a most zealous friend. By his advice, Miss Desmond let the home of her fathers, the birthplace of her sister and herself, to a

family of distinction, and retired, by invitation, to the house of a widow lady, who having herself been deeply afflicted, knew how to sympathize with and console the sorrows of her young friend.

Mr. Kinsale took upon himself to write Mr. Percy an account of sir Hector Desmond's death; but neither that letter, nor one written by Emily to her sister, were answered; and added to her other griefs, she had to mourn the unkind forgetfulness of her only near relation. Emily constantly prayed for the happiness of her sister, but she felt she prayed in vain, for whenever her thoughts glanced on the man to whom her fate was united, she knew that it was impossible an atheist, a gambler, and a libertine, could make a good husband.

Some weeks had passed since the death of sir Hector Desmond, and the winter had set in, when Emily was surprised by a letter from Mrs. Percy, bearing the Dublin post mark. The contents were not exactly what Emily expected or wished, for there was no sorrow expressed for the sudden and dreadful death of their father; and

the congratulations, offered her as sole heiress to his estates, she could well have spared; the only part that gave her pleasure was, that Mr. Percy had decided on living in Ireland, and that he had purchased a handsome house in Merion-square, of which they were to take possession immediately: the invitation given to herself, to take up her residence with them, Emily resolved to decline, though the impropriety of a person, young as she was, living alone and unprotected, was strongly pointed out.

The return of her beloved sister afforded the sad heart of Emily relief from the thousand fears and anxieties she had suffered on her account; she was well, and gave no hint of being dissatisfied with the conduct of her husband. So far all appeared satisfactory, but still it did not change her opinion of his unworthiness; and while preparing for a journey to Dublin, Emily became confirmed in the resolve never to place herself under the protection of Mr. Percy, or to allow him a pretence to interfere in her affairs.

When taking leave of her friend and guardian, Mr. Kinsale, Emily expressed a

belief that had her father lived, he would have forgiven her sister, for the date of his will proved it had been made under the excitement of anger, which most probably time would have removed.

"Not unlikely," replied Mr. Kinsale.

"I am fully persuaded it would have been so," resumed Emily, "and that I shall most properly honour my father's memory by dividing his estates with my sister."

"A very noble and generous intention," said Mr. Kinsale; "but be not too hasty; take an old friend's advice: conceal your design till you are of age, before which the law will not allow you to make an assignment; give no promise; enter into no engagements that may tend to increase the extravagance of a profligate man; for it is possible that at no very distant period, your sister may bless your father for having excluded her from a share in his estates, and bless you also for the generosity that secures her from the evils of poverty."

Emily thanked the worthy Kinsale for his advice, and promised to follow it. On arriving in Dublin, she sought out a lady

who had been an intimate acquaintance of her aunt, whom she had held in high esteem, from the many excellent qualities of her heart, as well as for the strength of her understanding.

To Mrs. Rochfort, who received her most affectionately, Miss Desmond avowed her determination not to reside with her sister in Merion-square, the state of her health and spirits being far too weak and depressed to bear late hours, or support the fatigue attendant on high life, as well as on account of her dislike of Mr. Percy. Emily at the same time expressed a wish to obtain lodgings suitable to her rank and fortune, in a house of known respectability.

Mrs. Rochfort shook her head. — “Doubtless there are many persons of good character in Dublin who would be happy to receive you as a lodger,” said she; “but I by no means approve of a young creature like you, inexperienced in the ways of the world, living by yourself, in lodgings.” No, no, it must not be; it would expose you to male impertinence, and female slander.”

"Alas! I did not foresee the perils of my lonely situation," replied Emily, mournfully; "but what can I do?"

"Why if you can make up your mind to bear with my quiet unostentatious mode of living," said Mrs. Rochfort, kindly taking her hand; "if you can submit to join my sober rational parties, and be content to fill the place of my daughter, who is abroad with her husband, you will do me a favour by taking immediate possession of her apartments, and considering yourself at home; under my protection, you will be safe from the attacks of envy and malevolence; and I hope, in a short time, your cheek will regain the rosy tint I used to admire when you were a child."

Emily burst into tears of grateful joy. To remain with Mrs. Rochfort was an offer as agreeable as unexpected; it removed a weight of care and apprehension from her mind. Mrs. Rochfort's rank in life, the high character she bore, rendered her protection most desirable to Emily, who was sensible how much she stood in need of a sensible and experienced friend of her

own sex, whose advice she could ask, when fearful that her own judgment would lead her into error.

With a gracious smile of benevolence, Mrs. Rochfort forbad all thanks, declaring she was the person most obliged.—“It is not often,” said she, “that youth and loveliness willingly shed their radiance on the waning hours of age; and when so rare an occurrence does happen, the old woman on whom the favour is bestowed ought to feel most grateful.”

Having undergone much fatigue in her journey, Emily was not sorry to retire to rest, particularly as Mrs. Rochfort had informed her Mrs. Percy gave a ball that night, and of course would have little time to devote to her.

It was late the following day when Mrs. Rochfort's carriage conveyed Miss Desmond to Merion-square, where a tall footman rudely stared her in the face, as he opened the door of a parlour, where a few dying embers gleamed faintly in the stove, and the tables exhibited disgusting traces of the last night's revelry.

Emily shivered, not altogether with

cold; but her uneasy reflections were soon interrupted by a tawdry highly-rouged female, who informed her that Mrs. Percy was not up, but she had orders to conduct Miss Desmond to the bed-chamber.

"Where is Mr. Percy?" asked Emily, not choosing to encounter him; "is he up?"

"I really do not know, ma'am; but I can inquire of Mr. Sutton, if you wish to know."

Emily only wished to ascertain his absence from her sister's chamber; and replying it was of no consequence, followed the *femme de chambre* up a flight of stairs, strewn with broken and faded exotics, torn fans, bows of ribbon, and soiled gloves, which the negligence of the servants had allowed to remain till past midday, a melancholy proof of misrule and mismanagement in the upper and lower departments of the family.

Mrs. Percy was sitting up in bed, sipping strong green tea, when her sister flew to embrace her.—"Have a care, Emily; you will scald yourself and me," said she, giving the breakfast-cup to her maid.

Having coldly kissed her sister's cheek, she looked at her for a moment, and then observed, rather spitefully,—“Why, Miss Desmond, you look as pale and thin as if your father had left his estates to your stepmother. I expected to see a rich heiress full of health and spirits, rosy and joyous!”

“Isabella, dearest Isabella, do not break my heart with this unkindness, this coldness!”

Mrs. Percy laughed hysterically, then burst into tears, and throwing her arms round Emily's neck, sobbed violently. Her maid administered *sal volatile* and water; which having recovered her, she bade her remove the breakfast-things.

The maid having retired, Mrs. Percy entreated her sister to forgive her.—“I was wrong,” said she, “to treat you with coldness, for I am certain you have pleaded for my pardon with my father. I confess I was to blame in marrying so precipitately—but regrets are useless.”

“I trust, dear Isabella, you have no cause for regret.”

Mrs. Percy smothered a sigh; while

Emily repeated—"I trust you are happy?"

"As happy as people who marry in haste generally are. Mr. Percy is too polite to interfere with my amusements, as long as I do not interrupt his. But why do you weep, child? I assure you we are very happy."

But this assurance did not satisfy Emily, who saw repentance and sorrow had set their blighting seals on the once blooming and animated countenance of Isabella; that her cheerfulness did not, as formerly, proceed from a heart at ease, but was an effort to disguise sorrow, repentance, and disappointment, that pride could not bring itself to confess. Mrs. Percy described England as a fine fertile country; but with all its great and splendid advantages, she expressed a decided preference of Ireland, which she hoped never to quit again.

Emily discovered, in this strongly-expressed preference, much more of the *amor patriæ* than it was natural she should feel; but Mrs. Percy so evaded her questions, respecting her reception by Mr. Percy's

relations, that she could learn nothing more than that they were persons of rank, wealthy, and extremely arrogant and disagreeable; that Mr. Percy had been disappointed by them in some expectations he had encouraged; and that himself and family had parted mutually displeased.—“And, for my part,” added Isabella, “I hope it will never be my misfortune to meet any one of them again.”

Little pleasant or satisfactory as this interview with her sister had proved to Miss Desmond, she saw that time had moved with its usual rapidity, for on consulting her watch, she found it was time to be gone, that she might prepare for Mrs. Rochfort's rather early dinner-hour; but on wishing her sister good morning, she looked astonished, and inquired whether she was going, and if she had not ordered her trunks to be brought to Merion-square?

These inquiries compelled Emily to confess she had actually accepted Mrs. Rochfort's offer of protection during her minority, and was already established in her house.

Mrs. Percy expressed herself much of-

fended at this arrangement, which she said evinced but little affection for her, and absolute disrespect towards Mr. Percy.

“For you, Isabella, believe me, I have the truest and warmest affection,” replied Emily; “but you cannot have forgotten that Mr. Percy’s opinions and mine never did agree; and as you have not told me of any alteration in his mind or belief, the same cause for disapprobation, on my part, still exists; Mr. Percy is a freethinker, and as I cannot listen to his sentiments without feeling abhorrence and terror, it is better for us all that we should not inhabit the same house.” Mrs. Percy was about to speak, when Emily, entreating to be heard, continued to say—“There is another reason, and a powerful one, why I should not reside with you—I have had a severe fit of illness lately, and my health is at this time very far from good; I have been ordered to eat simple food, and to keep early hours; this I could not do, did I live under your roof, for yourself and Mr. Percy are partial to those amusements which I have neither strength nor spirits to engage in. This statement, dearest Isa-

bella, must convince you that it is far better for me to continue with Mrs. Rochfort, whose regular hours exactly suit my health and my inclination, which you know always led me to prefer tranquillity and privacy to bustle and parade."

Mrs. Percy's alternation of countenance betrayed a struggle of conflicting emotions, which caused a tremor in her voice, as she replied—"Yes, I see—yes, I am convinced it will be for the best, on many accounts, that you should remain with Mrs. Rochfort. Mr. Percy's opinions and yours are indeed very opposite; I wish it were otherwise; but it is not in my power to change his way of thinking."

"Have you ever tried?" asked Emily.

"Me! what a strange question! No, I am not equal to the support of a religious controversy."

"But it is your duty to make an effort to convert an unbeliever," said Emily; "saint Paul says—*The believing wife may convert the unbelieving husband.*"

"It might have been so in the olden time," replied Mrs. Percy; "but in these days, wives have not sufficient influence

over their husbands; and mine is too much attached to the pleasures of this life, to bestow a single moment's reflection on that to come."

"Alas for him that it should be so! and for you to have made so unfortunate a choice!"

"Being past remedy, I must make the best I can of my fate," replied Isabella, with a tear in her eye, and a smile on her lip. "Mr. Percy is anxious you should live with us, and I promised him I would persuade you; but I am not sorry your arrangements are already made—our mode of living would not suit your delicate state of health—our late hours, and racketing about, would render you still paler and thinner; yes, yes, it certainly is better you should remain with Mrs. Rochfort."

Seeing her sister not only reconciled to her refusal, but approving it, Emily took her leave, having promised to be frequent in her visits. Just as she was stepping into the carriage, her hand was seized by Mr. Percy, who seemed rejoiced to see her, and endeavoured to persuade her to return with him into the house; but plead-

ing Mrs. Röchfort's dinner-hour, she apologized for leaving him so abruptly, and drove off, glad to get away from him; for she saw, by the dark frown gathering on his brow, that he was greatly offended at learning she did not intend residing with her sister.

Having obtained possession of Isabella's fortune, Mr. Percy repaired to England so suddenly, that Mrs. Percy could not, on so short a notice, prevail on any friend she wished to accompany her; and the irksomeness and extreme unpleasantness of travelling without a female friend, was merely rendered bearable by her husband's assurances that the females of his family, all of them persons of rank and high character, would shew her every attention, and render a companion from her own country unnecessary.

Mr. Percy had resolved to pay the tradespeople on whose books his name stood to a large amount, as well as his debts of honour, not from a principle of honesty, but with a hope that it would be the means of reconciling him to his uncle, sir Robert Percy, and to a maiden aunt, who having

outlived several relations, had become immensely rich, by their having bequeathed her large portions of their wealth. Mrs. Ellenor Cyril was the godmother of Percy; she had bestowed her name upon him; and in his childhood had been so fond of him, as to wish he had been of her own sex, that she might have adopted and brought him up under her own particular management; but as he grew up, he displayed so many bad propensities, that she had withdrawn her countenance from him; and previous to his going to France, his character had become so notorious for gambling, and other excesses, that she had joined in the wish expressed by the rest of his family, that he might never return.

The moment he set foot on English ground, Mr. Percy wrote to sir Robert Percy and Mrs. Ellenor Cyril long penitential letters, promising future good conduct, and praying their forgiveness of past errors; informing them that he had in Ireland married a rich heiress, of ancient and honourable family, whom he had brought over to introduce to them, and for whom

he begged their countenance, she being young, amiable, and a stranger; and whose affection for him, a proof of his altered conduct, had enabled him to discharge the debts; on account of which he had been compelled to fly his country.

Sir Robert Percy, a good-hearted but weak old man, ordered his daughters to call upon Mrs. Cyril Percy, as soon as her arrival in London was announced.

Mrs. Ellenor Cyril promised to go with the young ladies; but at the same time she did not give such ready belief to the reformation of her profligate nephew as sir Robert did; though she protested, if he was reclaimed, she should be sincerely glad; but——

“Ay, ay, Ellenor,” interrupted sir Robert, “those confounded ifs and buts of yours have kept you single all your life.”

“I am quite contented with my condition,” replied Mrs. Ellenor: “by remaining single, sir Robert, I have escaped all the cares and troubles attendant on matrimony, and am perfect mistress of my time and fortune: I do not dissuade others from

taking husbands, but for myself I rejoice in my celibacy."

Mr. Percy, on his arrival in London, took handsome lodgings in a fashionable street; and having paid the bills of his several trades-people, went, with the schedule of their liquidated accounts in his hand, to offer his respects to sir Robert Percy, who received him with great cordiality, gave him much good advice, and promised his countenance and friendship to his young bride.

The ladies of the Percy family came in great state the following morning, to pay their promised visit; but on Mrs. Percy, accustomed all her life to the affable free manners of her open-hearted countrywomen, the coldness and reserve of the English ladies did not operate in their favour; but they were the relations of her husband, and she endeavoured to like them.

The Misses Percy never had an opinion of their own, and they waited for the fiat of their oracle, before they pronounced upon the person of the bride, or could tell whether they liked or not.

Mrs. Ellenor was averse to precipitate

sympathies or antipathies; and she told the young ladies, she must see more of Mrs. Percy before she ventured to pass an opinion upon her.

At a dinner-party, a few days after, Isabella brought Mrs. Ellenor to a decision, by being dressed in the very extreme of fashion, and by conversing more, and with greater freedom, with a gentleman of the party, than the old maid thought prudent or proper in a young married woman. That very night, when the company were taking leave, Mrs. Ellenor whispered to the Misses Percy, her disapprobation of the bride, whose dress, she said, was offensive to the eyes of delicacy, and whose manners were free, even to boldness.

Arrived at home, sir Robert good-naturally took the part of Mrs. Percy; but he was silenced by his daughters, who repeated, in the old gentleman's ears—"My aunt Ellenor says so and so—my aunt Ellenor objects—my aunt Ellenor disapproves—and you will not deny her discernment—you will not dispute her judgment?"

After her guests had departed, Mrs. Ellenor Cyril began to reflect; if the bride of her nephew was the person of rank and fortune she was represented to be, it was a strange circumstance that she had left Ireland, without relation or friend coming over with her to a land of strangers: by dwelling on this, Mrs. Ellenor became suspicious; she remembered the many impositions and deceits formerly resorted to by Cyril Percy, to extract money from his relations, and she was confirmed in the belief, that he had then some nefarious scheme in agitation. Mrs. Ellenor whispered her suspicions, first to the Misses Percy, and then to one of her intimate friends, and this friend to others, till it was at last asserted and believed, that the young person who called herself Mrs. Percy, was in reality not the wife, but the companion of the libertine Cyril Percy.

The ladies who had visited and invited Isabella to their houses, now considered themselves insulted—denied themselves when she called,—and entirely withdrew from her acquaintance: those who had husbands, politely suggested to Percy the

expediency of proving his marriage, in justice to himself, and the young lady he called his wife. With this advice Percy chose to be offended, and resenting the suspicions of his relations, refused to be at the pains to remove them. The fact was, he had fallen in with some of his old associates, and the gaming-table was again absorbing his thoughts, and draining his purse; for though infatuated by play, his winnings seldom were equal to his losses. Without being able to assign a reason, or to guess the cause, the unfortunate Isabella found herself answered with "not at home" wherever she called. Her new-formed acquaintance never returned her calls; Mr. Percy's relations had withdrawn their attentions, and avoided her intimacy with almost rudeness; and in a few short weeks she found herself abandoned to her own melancholy reflections. From Mr. Percy she could obtain no explanation of the mortification she was enduring from his family, and their friends; indeed, it was seldom he spent an evening at home, and when he did, it was to entertain a party of his own companions, from whose conver-

sation she was glad to seek refuge in the solitude of her bed-chamber, where she wept, with tears of bitter repentance, the rashness of her conduct, in having married a man, of whose disposition and principles she had been so frequently warned. Vainly she wished herself with that dear sister, whose counsel she had derided and despised; and how anxiously did she sigh for that home, whence she was now expelled for ever!

One doubt begets another; Mr. Percy's relations had brought themselves to believe that he had gambled in Ireland, and won the large sum of money with which he had paid his creditors; and that his return to England had been occasioned by his having made himself too notorious among the Hibernians, to remain longer with them in safety. But though unacquainted with these opinions and suspicions, nothing could be more unpleasant and annoying than the situation of Isabella, who, when weary of solitude, and desirous to visit some public place, was told by her husband, he had an engagement, and could not go with her; but she

could take the person with whom they lodged, or her daughters—two vulgar, ill-bred girls; but these companions her pride would not allow her to accept: and having met repeated denials and excuses from her husband, wounded and mortified, she at last came to the resolution to confine herself entirely to the house: but here she was not suffered to escape insult and persecution; Mr. Percy's associates either did not, or pretended not, to believe her his wife, and treated her with so much freedom, and indulged in such improper conversations before her, that she complained of the indignity she suffered to her husband, and insisted on being allowed to keep her chamber, when he chose to receive visitors who had neither the manners nor language of gentlemen.

Mr. Percy ridiculed her delicacy, laughed at what he called her prudery, and told her she was utterly ignorant of fashionable life, or she would not express such disgust at what a duchess or countess would only laugh at.

It was this absolute indifference to the insults she received from his licentious

companions that opened Isabella's eyes to the real character of her husband; had he loved her, as he had persuaded her to believe, he would have been indignant that another should presume to assail her with professions of love, or dare to offend her delicacy with licentious language; it was glaringly evident he had married her to possess himself of her fortune, and that her feelings, her comfort, her peace of mind, were all sacrificed to a man destitute of religion, honour, and decency.

Night after night, Isabella's lonely pillow was wet with tears; while the libertine Percy was losing large sums at the gaming-table, or in squandering money in pursuits that rendered his wife an object of perfect indifference to him.

Want of rest, combined with mortified pride, and disappointed hope, had robbed Isabella of her bloom and vivacity; she was pale, thin, and almost broken-hearted, when one night, having wearied herself with listening to passing coaches, and expecting the return of Mr. Percy, she retired to bed, and, contrary to her usual wakeful mood, forgot her misery in sleep.

which she had not enjoyed long, before she was roused by Mr. Percy, who rudely shook her by the arm, and bade her instantly arise, and pack up her trunks, "for a chaise would presently be at the door.

"Whither are we going?" asked Isabella.

"Back to Ireland," replied Percy. "Come, be expeditious, while I settle accounts with the house."

Isabella was too much rejoiced at the thought of returning to Ireland to make unnecessary delay; and before the chaise arrived, the trunks were packed, her travelling-dress on, and all ready for departure.

When seated in the chaise, Isabella asked the reason of his so sudden resolution to quit England?

"To oblige you, my love," replied Percy.

Isabella looked incredulous.

"Why what other motive could I have? I perceive the air of England does not agree with you; and as to the suddenness of our departure, I have had it in contemplation some time, but did not mention it, because I wished to give you an agreeable surprise."

"You say truly," said Isabella, "it is an agreeable surprise; but you have been so very seldom attentive to my wishes, that you will pardon me, Mr. Percy, if I doubt the reason you have assigned for this hurried departure; at any rate, I am thankful for the occasion, be it what it may, that removes me from the mortifications and insults I have received in England, and so unexpectedly restores me to that dear native country, where my life passed so happily, that I only knew regret and sorrow by name."

"Well, well, no whimpering; I detest lachrymals. You are on your way to Ireland, and may be as happy as ever if you please."

Mrs. Percy endeavoured to restrain her tears; but her heart, lacerated and disappointed, told her happiness was separated from her for ever.

"And as I return to Ireland in conformity with your wishes," resumed Percy, "purposely to oblige you, without any motive of my own. I expect that you, Isabella, will oblige me in return."

"I fear," replied Mrs. Percy, "I have

no power left to confer an obligation on you, having left myself nothing to bestow."

"You will oblige me," returned Percy, "by forgetting all that has occurred since our arrival in this country: promise me," continued he, taking her hand, and pressing it with an appearance of affection, "promise me a gracious oblivion."

Isabella's tears fell on the hand that held hers.—"How is it possible I can forget what has wounded me so deeply and severely?"

"But you can promise," said Percy, relinquishing her hand, "you can promise not to repeat to your sister and your friends past circumstances, by which I have been a greater sufferer than you; for, to explain the conduct of my family, which to you appeared strange and mysterious, they were offended that I had married an Irish-woman; but this might have been got over, had you not discovered that you were a Catholic, by inquiring of Mrs. Ellenor Cyril for a priest."

"I do not recollect having made such an inquiry," said Isabella; "but I could never have supposed my religion would

have subjected me to the dislike and desertion of your family, or that they would have been so illiberal and cruel as to influence others to abandon me, merely because my religious belief differed from theirs.

"My family are bigotted to their own opinions," replied Percy; "their prejudices are insurmountable; but, for my part, I disregard them; and I hope you will follow my example."

"In what relates to my religion I certainly shall."

"Ay, and treat their conduct with the contemptuous silence it merits. Promise me, Isabella, that you will not mention it to your sister, who, doubtless, would speak of the affair to her friends, which can, you know, my love, answer no good purpose, and will only furnish tittle-tattle, and afford triumph to Emily, who did all she could to dissuade you from marrying me."

"You mistake the character of Emily," replied Mrs. Percy; "she would, I am certain, grieve for, not triumph over my disappointed hopes—but out of respect for myself, I shall be careful not to publish my mortifications—for my own sake I

shall keep secret the little pleasure my excursion to England has afforded me."

"I understand you perfectly," said Percy, yawning; "you think, by representing me as an exemplary husband, sir Hector Desmond may be brought to relent, that he will forgive your marrying in defiance of his will, and leave you at his death a share of his fortune."

"I should be most happy," returned Mrs. Percy, "to be reconciled to my father, let him dispose of his fortune how he will; not that I shall ever be satisfied with his having made a second choice, after remaining a widower so many years. Mrs. Chatterton was never a favourite of mine; and her rude behaviour to me at Doneraile Castle, when she fancied me her rival, confirmed my dislike; it was plain to see, she would have married sir Harry Ogle, or any one else, that could have bestowed a title upon her. My father was sufficiently rich; he did not covet her fortune, for he never was of a mercenary or avaricious disposition. I cannot think what induced him to marry her; for her beauty, if ever she had any, is far on the

wane; but I certainly believe there is destiny in these things.

Mr. Percy made no reply; his eyes were shut, and he slept, or pretended to sleep.

Isabella had no wish to disturb him; she leaned back in the chaise, but her mind was too busy with the past and the future, to allow her to take the repose her aching head and agitated spirits required. Mr. Percy had said he would reside altogether in Ireland, and she hoped that he would not change his mind; for though she wished to avoid the *celat* of a separation from her husband, she resolved, be the consequences what they might, she would never again quit Ireland, where, if his conduct continued irreclaimable, he would not dare to obtrude his reprobate companions upon her; and to console her domestic unhappiness, she should have her sister, and their mutual friends, in whose society she should enjoy temporary forgetfulness of sorrow. Isabella thought, in the insulting neglect of Mr. Percy's family, her own relations and acquaintance would read their condemnation of her hasty marriage; she therefore resolved to be silent on the

subject; she had forged a chain for herself, and though its pressure pained even to her heart's core, knowing herself powerless to break the links, she saw the wisdom of concealing from the world what foes might aggravate, though friendship could not cure.

These reflections lasted till they stopped where they had appointed to take breakfast; while partaking of this refreshment, Mr. Percy evaded all conversation, by perusing several letters, from which having detached two, he threw the rest into the fire; placing the selected ones before his wife, he bade her look them over, while he gave the necessary orders for pursuing their journey. The letters were those written by Emily and Mr. Kinsale, announcing the death of sir Hector Desmond, and the disposal of his estate.

Mr. Percy, when he returned, found his wife in a fainting fit; but in spite of the landlady's remonstrances against the cruelty of obliging the lady to set off in such a state of illness, and her desire to send for a doctor, Mr. Percy carried Isabella to the chaise, telling those who were inclined to inveigh against his brutality,

that fresh air, and the motion of the carriage, would do more for her recovery than all the medicines a doctor could prescribe for her.

A salutary gush of tears in some measure restored Isabella, and enabled her to ask why the death of her father had been so long concealed from her.

"Out of absolute tenderness and kindness to you," replied Percy; "you perceive he kept his resentment against you alive to the last; and as you were to gain nothing by his death, I was willing to spare you unavailing and unprofitable sorrow; nor would I have given you the intelligence now, only I knew you must learn the circumstances of sir Hector's exit from life on your arrival in Ireland; and I wished to give you a little time to recover, and put a good face on your disappointment respecting his will."

"I am not at all disappointed, Mr. Percy."

"What the devil! not disappointed? then your philosophy beats mine all to nothing, Mrs. Percy; for I confess I am

cursedly disappointed. I expected, after the old fellow had sworn and blustered, he would have pardoned you, as a good Christian ought; and in the disposal of his fortune, would have bequeathed you, his eldest born, the largest share."

"When you urged me to marry you," replied Mrs. Percy, "you seemed to consider my aunt's bequest more than sufficient, and of far less value than my affection."

"Nonsense! folly! men who know the turns and chances of life, have more sense than to think of affection when they encumber themselves with wives. In plain English, Mrs. Percy, the one half of sir Hector's property I certainly expected, and think he has treated me devilish ill; an accession of fortune would have been very agreeable and convenient just at this time, when——Curse it, you are at your lachrymals again, which I think extremely rude, when I have told you how disagreeable and annoying it is to me to see you with red eyes and blubbered cheeks."

"Oh my father!" exclaimed Isabella, "I would that I had died instead of you."

“Your death, my love, would be extremely inconvenient to me just now,” resumed Percy; “to part with you at this time, when I am looking forward to a life of happiness, would be a very serious misfortune. Come, come, Isabella, be cheerful, dry up your tears, and recollect that sorrow will not revive the dead: cheer up; we shall soon reach the port from whence we are to embark for the shores of green Erin.”

On quitting Holyhead, Mr. Percy threw aside the taunting humour with which he had tormented his wife during the greater part of their journey, and assumed the insinuating tone of affection, the attentive behaviour that had deluded her into uniting her fate with his. Seated beside her on the deck of the packet, he exerted the power he so eminently possessed to entertain her; and having succeeded in making her cheerful, he renewed the assurance of living always in Ireland; he proposed then taking a house in Dublin, where, in the midst of her friends, and having an establishment of her own, she might enjoy

life, and draw around her the gay and the fashionable.

Mrs. Percy was of a volatile temper, fond of shew and pleasure, and in planning her carriage, her liveries, and the furniture and decorations of her house, she brought herself to consider the dreadful manner of her father's death with composure, and was pleased to think he had left so small a portion of his wealth to his widow, though the bulk of it, to the absolute exclusion of herself, was bequeathed to Emily.

Mr. Percy also was secretly glad that the estates of sir Hector Desmond were not at the disposal of his widow, for he knew her character too well to believe she would be wrought upon to relinquish a single acre, or give up even the most trifling sum that the law entitled her to retain. But Emily was of a different disposition; he was certain she was to be persuaded or terrified, according to the will of those who had a point to gain, by working on the weakness of her nature, which was gentle, timid, and generous; his inordinate passion for gaming had nearly swallow-

ed up the fortune brought him by his wife

Percy's sudden and precipitate retreat from England, was urged by his dread of being called to account for having taken unfair advantages of a young gentleman, whom himself and his associates had drawn into play for a large sum, the loss of which was likely to involve not only himself, but an orphan sister also, in ruin. With the money thus villainously obtained, and the residue of Isabella's fortune, Percy resolved on taking a house, and persuading Emily, to reside with her sister, whom, as opportunity served, he would wheedle or menace into supplying him with such sums of money, or portions of her deceased father's estates, as he should from time to time find necessary. Full of this base project, he represented to Mrs. Percy the great impropriety of Miss Desmond living alone, and made her promise that she would point out to Emily the dangers and scandal attendant on her unprotected state, and most seriously and strongly urge her to take up her residence with them.

Mr. Percy's valet, when he attended to dress him for dinner, presented a note from

captain Langrish, in which he requested payment of two thousand pounds, which he had lent Percy at various times, observing that he was sorry to refresh Mr. Percy's memory, but that the illness of his uncle recalled him to England, and that being short of cash, and not having time to wait a remittance, he was compelled to call upon him.

"He may call upon the devil if he likes," said Percy, tearing the note to atoms; "what has he got to shew for the money? nothing. Ha, ha, ha! it was borrowed in France, lost in France, and he may go to France to seek it if he likes."

But in spite of this bravado, Percy was vexed; and though by no means partial to paying old debts, he would gladly have paid this, because he was unwilling that the earl of Vandeleur, and others of the fashionable circle where he was at present well received, should suspect his means were not adequate to the dashing style in which he lived. Now had Emily consented to reside in Merion-square, he might have borrowed the money of her; but as it was, he was at a loss how to raise

it, without spreading an alarm among those persons who had supplied his carriage, furnished his house, filled his wine-cellar, and decorated his person. Captain Langrish, having no acknowledgment, could not oblige him to pay the money; but to deny the debt, would injure him in the opinion of those on whose purses he had formed designs. The affair was most vexatious and embarrassing; and when he sat down to dinner *tête-à-tête* with Isabella, he was completely out of temper.

When the servants were withdrawn, Mrs. Percy informed him that Miss Desmond had declined residing with them, on account of her ill health, to which their mode of life would be inimical.

" "Ridiculous subterfuge!" exclaimed Percy, "but she will repent having an establishment of her own."

"At present she has no such intention," resumed Isabella; "she has placed herself under the protection of Mrs. Rochfort, the particular and highly-respected friend of our late aunt."

Percy had heard Mrs. Rochfort spoken of as a woman of superior mind, and in

proachable character, and he feared her advice and influence would operate against his scheme of duping and extracting money from Emily. He was greatly out of humour when he sat down to table, and he gave vent to his angry feelings by accusing his wife of coldness in her invitation to her sister, whose presence might have been a troublesome check to her levity—"Not that I care a straw where she lives," said Percy, "and perhaps it is for the best she does not come to us."

"No doubt it is," replied Isabella; "for between Emily and you, Mr. Percy, there never was cordiality to promise that an intimacy involving eating at the same table, and sleeping under the same roof, could be attended with pleasurable results on either side; and when I recollect how very little you have hitherto esteemed each other, I must confess I think it is far better you should reside apart."

"You think like a fool," said Percy.

"That I have acted like a fool," replied Isabella, restraining the tears that were ready to start from her eyes, "I cannot pretend to deny; but, at any rate, my sis-

ter shews her wisdom in avoiding being treated with rudeness and insult, which I fear your unrestrained temper would extend even to her, gentle and amiable as she is."

"For gentle and amiable, write artful, hypocritical, and designing," returned Percy.

"This is too much," said Isabella, rising from the table; "I have patiently borne to hear myself ridiculed, taunted, and accused, but I will not stay to hear my artless, innocent Emily reviled."

She was quitting the room, when Percy, placing his back against the door, said—"You shall not go, madam, till you have heard me declare; that it is my opinion your artless, innocent sister cunningly kept alive your father's resentment against you, and with her affected obedience, and pretended affection, prevailed on him to make his will entirely in her favour. Yes, yes, the pious gentle Emily thinks she has ousted you completely; but she may find herself mistaken, for it is my intention to take a counsellor's opinion, whether an unnatural father's will, made to the utter ex-

clusion of his eldest child from any share of his property, cannot be proved an act of insanity, and set aside. You may be satisfied to see your sister possessed of "sir Hector Desmond's estates," because you think I am vexed and disappointed; you may also believe that your fortune has made me a rich man, but I beg to inform you that it is all gone."

"Gone! Heaven forbid!" said Mrs. Percy; "gone where?"

"That is a question out of my power to answer," replied Percy; "have you never understood that money has wings? how is it possible that I can trace its flight? part of it may be sailing through the air in a balloon, or taking a voyage to the antipodes, for any thing I can tell."

"And what is to become of me?" asked Mrs. Percy.

"What is to become of Cyril Percy, you mean, who owes more thousands than he has hundreds to pay them with."

Isabella sunk on a chair.

Seeing her turn pale, Percy poured out a glass of wine, and forced her to swallow it.—"It is of no use to give way to faint-

ing fits," said he; "now is the time to exert your fortitude, if you possess any."

Isabella sighed deeply.

"Plainly," resumed Percy, "I owe captain Langrish two thousand pounds; he must be paid, or I am a ruined man, and at this moment I do not know where to turn for as many hundreds."

"You have terrified me sufficiently with this tale of pretended ruin," said Mrs. Percy, trying to laugh. "Now let me go—I shall scarcely have time to dress for the countess of Vandeleur's concert, for which I should have no spirits, could I believe that you had actually made away with the whole of my fortune, and reduced me to poverty."

"I have told you nothing but truth," replied Percy; "and unless you assist me to raise this infernal money for Langrish, I shall be degraded in the eyes of our friends—my character will be blasted for ever. Your sister most likely will provide for you; but I must submit to the miseries of incarceration, or, to escape this, become a wandering exile. Have you no feeling for yourself or me, that you sit

if you were an image cut out of stone?"

"What would you have me do?" asked Isabella, faintly.

"Go to-morrow morning to your sister," said Percy; "tell her you purchased diamonds and *bijouterie* in England to the amount of three thousand pounds, and that the jeweller has written to demand immediate payment; say that I have bought an estate, that has drained me of all the money I can at present spare, and that you fear to vex and irritate me by mentioning the jeweller's bill, which I may think extravagant."

A refusal to impose so grossly upon her sister, was trembling on the lips of Isabella, which Percy silenced, by saying—"Borrow or beg the money from her, as suits your fastidious delicacy best; but see you procure it, for if you fail, I will not survive to expose my circumstances to the world, and to be looked upon with contempt by Langrish."

With this menace he left Isabella to reflect on the horrors of her situation, to decide whether she would borrow the money from her sister, or suffer him to de-

stroy himself, a crime she was persuaded he would not hesitate to commit, whenever his prospects became clouded, and his means of enjoying life failed, for he had no belief in another world, but in death expected annihilation. Isabella shuddered; he was her husband; if he lived, he might become repentant of his errors—he might become a Christian; her religion and her duty commanded her to save him: it was distressing to her pride to appear extravagant in the eyes of Emily, and to be reduced to the necessity of borrowing money of her, who was still in her minority, but the apprehension of her husband committing suicide, was still more terrible to her feelings.

“ Having decided that she should be accessory to his death by refusing to apply to her sister for the money he wanted, Mrs. Percy was leaving the dining-room, when her husband, with a look of stern resolve, stood before her—“ Tell me, Isabella,” said he, “ have you resolved to save, or murder me ?”

“ To save you, if it is possible, now and hereafter.”

"I am content with now," said he; "for hereafter I have neither hope nor fear. You will apply to your sister in the morning—you promise me this?"

"Most solemnly," replied Isabella.

"That promise saves my life," said Percy, deliberately taking from his bosom a pair of pistols; then ringing for Saunders his valet, he bade him take them away, draw the charge, and prepare his things for him to dress.

"You do not mean to go out to-night, Cyril?" said Isabella.

"And why not?" asked he. "What is the use of staying at home to brood over one's misfortunes? I make it a rule to run away from melancholy: and look," said he, pointing to a time-piece, "do you see the hour? away and dress as expeditiously as you can, or you will be late at the concert."

"I do not intend to go—I am too much out of spirits."

But fearful if left alone she might on reflection see cause to change her mind respecting borrowing the money for him, he took pains to persuade her that she

would offend the countess of Vandeleur, by absentiug herself from the concert, after having promised to sing a duet with her.

Isabella's thoughts were full of terrific images of self-murder, for her husband's wild and determined look, the display of the pistols prepared for the commission of an act of blood, still made her nerves tremble, as memory repeated his horrible menace; and she hastened to dress, not from any pleasure she promised herself at the concert, for her mind was out of tune, but with the hope that in the gaiety of the scene, she might be diverted from dwelling too intently on the misery of her past and future situation, and forget for a few hours the revolting promise she had given to extort money from her sister, by calumniating herself, and telling a mean falsehood, to keep in existence a most unworthy man.

We have said before, that Mrs. Percy was of a volatile disposition; when roused, her feelings were acute, but not deep; grief, if followed by no privations, soon passed away; she was unthinking, fond of splendour and amusement; the putting on

a new and expensive lace dress, the declaration of her *femme de chambre* that she was the handsomest woman in Dublin, had so soothed the irritation of her nerves, that as she clasped a rich pearl bracelet on her arm, she became persuaded things were not arrived at such extremity as Mr. Percy had represented, and that it might be possible so to arrange his affairs, as to avoid the disgrace of public exposure.

At the countess of Vandeleur's mansion, the spacious and magnificently-decorated rooms, blazing with perfumed wax-lights, the sound of music, and the smiling, affable reception given her by the Circe, whose spells were exerted to draw the gay and the young within the sphere of her enchantments, entirely dispelled the sadness that had lingered about her heart. She was delighted with the warm greetings of the fashionables of both sexes, who declared they had been *au desespoir*, lest some accident should have deprived them of the felicity of seeing her that evening. Mrs. Percy was young and credulous, or she might have remembered she had heard the same thing said by the same person,

without meaning any thing more than a passing compliment.* When called upon to sing, though there was a slight tremor in her voice, she got through the duet with the countess, in a manner that obtained much general applause, and drew, even from the countess, very particular praise, who did her the honour to call her "my dear friend," and to say how happy she felt to renew their acquaintance: she complimented Mrs. Percy on her improved beauty, and the taste and elegance of her dress.

In this scene of splendour, surrounded by flatterers, admired and admiring, the thoughtless Isabella forgot her late terrors, and the impending poverty with which she had been menaced, and became as joyous and lively as ever. Seeing the earl of Vandeleur, captain Langrish, and her husband, enter the room together, and appear to be on their usual terms of friendliness and intimacy, she encouraged the idea that Percy had put off the payment of his debt to captain Langrish, or had settled the affair in some way or other. This thought so exhilarated her spirits, that she

gave an Irish song with so much taste and humour, as to excite envy and malice in the countess of Vandeleur, who, in a whisper to madame Belvoir, said that she detested national songs, and that Mrs. Percy's style and manner were excessively vulgar.

"Sans doute," replied madame Belvoir; "she not have de voice, de taste, nor de maniere of ma chere ami, de comtesse Vandeleur. Quelle pitie!" continued the Frenchwoman, shrugging her shoulders; "madame Percy herself expose to de ridicule! en verité she sing ver much bad—vidout de time or de tune."

"She fancies herself a beauty," resumed the countess.

"Bah, bah, la petite bégueule! est il possible?"

"C'est bien vrai; she is a compound of conceit and effrontery," said the countess; "but though by no means a favourite of mine, I receive her on my public nights, because she is useful to me, when I cannot obtain a better singer." Yet Mrs. Percy, though not a favourite, was strongly pressed to be of lady Vandeleur's party to the theatre the following evening

Mr. Percy, contrary to his usual practice, went home in the carriage with his wife, and never quitted her that night, not from any motive of affection, but because he did not wish her to reflect on the disagreeable task he had imposed upon her, or to contrive the means of evading it; and though it confirmed his opinion that she never felt or thought, but when roused to sensibility by some strongly-exciting circumstance, he was glad she slept through the night, as it would give her strength, for the performance of her promise.

In the morning, Mr. Percy took breakfast with his wife, who, from the calmness of his manner, and his not adverting to her promise, supposed it was no longer necessary she should keep it; but on her mentioning some calls she had to make that morning, Percy said—"After you have procured me the three thousand pounds from your sister. Mrs. Rochfort's breakfast-hour is earlier than ours; this will be the best time to meet Emily alone; you had better order your carriage—I shall wait at home till you return."

"I thought—I hoped," replied Isabella,

changing colour, "that you had settled the affair with captain 'Langrish, and that it would be unnecessary."

"It is now more necessary than ever," returned Percy, "for I have promised Langrish to pay him the money this evening, and if you do not procure it for me, you know my resolve."

This terrific hint was all-sufficient; Isabella neither loved nor respected her husband, but she was certain, if he destroyed himself, without her having used every means in her power to save him, she should never know another hour's peace of mind. This conviction brought her "*courage to the sticking-place*"—she drove to Mrs. Rochfort's, who received her most kindly and courteously; and after inviting her to make one at her sober parties, whenever she found it agreeable, she left the sisters alone.

The generous feeling heart of Emily was easily worked upon, and though she gently blamed Mrs. Percy for the thoughtless extravagance of expending so large a sum of money on baubles, she instantly gave her a draught on Mr. Kinsale for

three thousand pounds, at the same time begging her not to be uneasy about the payment, for she should not prove so troublesome a creditor as the English jeweller.

Isabella blushed, and wept on the bosom of her sister, whom she blessed and thanked for saving her from certain misery.

Emily's tears mingled with Mrs. Percy's, but hers were gracious drops of benevolence and pity, while those that fell from the eyes of Isabella were the burning tears of shame and regret, for having imposed upon the generous affectionate nature of her amiable confiding sister.

If ever Cyril Percy had possessed sentiments of delicacy and feelings of humanity, they had been totally effaced by a long course of vice and dissipation; his conscience was seared, and he felt no shame at robbing Emily of three thousand pounds; neither was he visited by any compunction, for having terrified his wife into becoming the agent of a mean dishonest deception, to impose upon, and defraud her own sister—his only feeling was apprehension that she might not suc-

ceed; every five minutes he consulted his watch, and fancied every minute lengthened to an hour. In a state of feverish impatience, he was pacing the drawing-room, when the stopping of a carriage drew him to the window—it was his wife returned; he thought her step unusually slow: had she failed to obtain the money?—had he been mistaken in Emily's character?—had she been too wary to part with three thousand pounds without security? If so, how was he to raise it? Furious with suspense, he threw open the drawing-room door, and scarcely allowed her time to enter, before he said—"What the devil has delayed you so long? Why do you not speak, Isabella? Have you succeeded?"

"I have struck my foot against the stairs," replied Mrs. Percy, sitting down and rubbing it. "How soon an accident happens! It pains me very much."

Regardless of the hurt she had sustained, Percy asked—"Have you brought me the money?"

"Do ring the bell, Mr. Percy," resumed Isabella; "I must have an embrocation sent for immediately. If my foot

swells, it will prevent my going to the theatre to-night."

"D—n your foot, the stairs, and the theatre!" exclaimed Percy. "Have you brought me the money?"

"I am infinitely obliged to you, Mr. Percy, for the solicitude you shew for my foot, though it was hurt in my haste to relieve you from anxiety and embarrassment. 'There is the money, sir,' said Isabella, taking the draft from her bosom, and placing it in his eagerly-extended hand; "do with it what you please; but assure yourself, I will never again lend myself to pay your gambling debts. I blush to think this sum has been obtained at the expence of imposing on the unsuspecting kindness and generosity of my sister, and incurring the reproach of my own conscience, which will never cease to upbraid me for this act of mean and wicked duplicity."

Isabella limped from the room, leaving Percy actually astonished; she had never before spoken with such spirit on any occasion; and remembering how very necessary an agent she would be in his future

extortions, for on his own account he knew he had nothing to hope or expect from Emily, he hastened after her to her dressing-room, to inquire, with hypocritical concern, into the hurt she had received, and to entreat her pardon for the hasty expression that had escaped him, in the unguarded moment of extreme agitation. He found her extended on the sofa, weeping bitterly, as her maid fomented her foot with vinegar, the hurt of which her fears had magnified, for it appeared to have sustained little injury.

Mrs. Percy at first was sullen, and paid no attention to his apologies; but she was of too easy a temper to retain anger, even for a single hour; and being extremely vain of the size and shape of her foot, he soon contrived to flatter her into good humour, by praising its delicacy and symmetry, and by promising her a pair of diamond ear-rings to wear at the theatre that night.

Isabella was delighted—the cloud of sorrow passed from her face, and the hurt of her foot was eased—madame Belvoir had a pair of diamond ear-rings, the sparkling of

which had raised her envy, and occasioned many a wish for a similar pair: this wish was about to be gratified; she was too happy to feel pain, or to remember that Percy had owned, the night before, that he had only a few hundred pounds remaining of the tens of thousands she had brought him; she considered not the folly and madness of adding to their involvements, and of lessening the trifle they still possessed, by the purchase of unnecessary baubles.

Percy having succeeded in conciliating his wife, left her, with an assurance of returning to dinner, and bringing with him the diamond ear-rings. Isabella thought it folly to anticipate misfortune, and with a determination to be happy as long as she could, she dressed herself to the utmost advantage; and when her toilet was finished, she was satisfied that the promised ear-rings were all that was wanting to render her much more attractive than *la belle veuve*, or the countess Vandeleur, who, according to her own account, had turned the heads of half the men at Paris.

It was near dinner-time when Mrs. Percy descended to the drawing-room, where a superb mirror reflected the whole of her figure to her perfect satisfaction; nothing was wanting to complete the elegance of her appearance, and give it the stamp of high fashion, but the ear-rings. It was half-an-hour since dinner had been announced, and she had ordered it to be kept back: Mr. Percy had not returned—she had no appetite; in fact, she was too much vexed and disappointed to think of eating. Mr. Percy had, times innumerable, broken his word with her, and it was silly in her to expect him to keep a promise at all.

Isabella gave a sigh to the diamond ear-rings, which she foresaw were never to be worn by her, and took up a pen, to write a note of apology to the countess Vandeleur, having made up her mind not to go to the theatre, to be out-sparkled by madame Belvoir.

Just as she began her note, she heard Mr. Percy's knock at the door. He entered in high spirits, and placed before the dazzled eyes of the weak-minded Isabella,

a casket, containing a set of superb ornaments, consisting of ear-rings, necklace, bracelets, brooches, and rings.

"Why, these diamonds are a fortune of themselves!" said Mrs. Percy, surveying them with mingled astonishment and admiration; "these ear-rings are far handsomer than madame Belvoir's! but you cannot mean these expensive ornaments for me!"

"Undoubtedly I do!" replied Percy; "as the daughter of sir Hector Desmond, as my wife, you are entitled to wear them."

"But, Cyril, if our circumstances are at the low ebb you have taught me to believe, it surely will be wiser not to deepen our involvements."

"Be under no apprehensions on that account," returned Percy; "my circumstances are not in so desperate a state as to forbid the hope of their being retrieved; but if ruin was actually on the road, it might be kept at bay, and compelled to retreat, if its approaches were concealed from public knowledge; but if only suspected to be on the advance, curiosity is

on the alert 'to pry into your affairs, and its speed is sure to be accelerated, by pretended friends and avowed enemies, who all have a malicious pleasure in assisting to crush a falling man. Nay, nay, do not close the casket ; the sparklers are yours : we must not forget the jeweller's bill, and that Emily will expect to see you wear the trinkets, for the payment of which she has advanced three thousand pounds ; I have discharged my debt to Langrish, and with the remaining thousand pounds, have purchased these diamonds for you."

" ~~Then~~ they really are paid for ?"

" Every stone of them," replied Percy.

After dinner Mrs. Percy put on her splendid ornaments, and at the appointed time, went with the countess of Vandeleur and her party to the theatre.

The countess of Vandeleur was splendidly dressed, and appeared all life and animation, till she perceived that the opposite box was occupied by the baroness Wandesford, Miss Lambart, lady Stella Egerton, and lady Indiana Corry ; and that the back of the box was actually crowded with young men of rank, among whom she

perceived the honourable colonel Lismore, and lord Monheghan, who had been an admirer of hers when at Paris.

Who is that beautiful girl who is speaking to sir Philip Egerton?" asked a young sprig of fashion, who, the moment before, had told the countess that her beauty eclipsed that of every female present.

"That," replied another gentleman, "is the honourable Miss Lambart."

"At this distance she appears an angel!" said the first speaker; "I must go over, and try to get introduced."

The countess looked round scornfully; but her beaux had all deserted her, and gone over to the other side. Determined not to appear chagrined, she laughed and talked so loud, as to draw the eyes of all in her vicinity upon her.

The entrance of the earl of Vandeleur, and a party of his friends, among whom was Mr. Percy, was some relief to her vexation; for it mattered little to the countess, whether her admirer was married or single, as long as he paid homage to her

beauty, and was an adept in the art of flattery.

Percy was pleased to discover that Wilmot Darel had abandoned his post at the side of the countess; he had left the field to him, and he was determined to leave no art untried to subdue her proud insensibility, and make the countess relinquish for him, what she now so highly prized, rank and fame.

The fair widow found the earl of Vandeleur uncommonly dull; he whispered no compliment in her ear—her vivacity was lost upon him. Madame Belvoir was offended and surprised; she narrowly watched his eyes, and at last discovered they were fixed on the opposite box.

After remaining during the representation of a very laughable farce, unmoved and unpartaking the merriment of those who laughed and applauded, just before the curtain fell, he hastily quitted the box, to the disappointment and displeasure of madame Belvoir, who expected he would have handed her to the carriage.

When seated beside the countess Van-

deleur, she began railing at Mrs. Percy's diamonds, as being clumsily set.

"She appeared all glitter," replied the countess; "but I did not examine her diamonds. What became of lord Vandeleur? I did not see him when we left the theatre."

"I never did see milor Vandeleur behave so rude; he sat mum—never pay me de littel compliment—say not von vord to make agreeable; but sit vid his eyes fix upon de vis-à-vis box all de time, like von personne ensorceled."

"You are perfectly correct in your idea," said the countess; "he is bewitched; for if he can love any thing in nature except himself, it is Miss Lambart."

"Il est extrêmement hypocrite!" exclaimed madame Belvoir; "does he feel de love, de passion for his cousine?"

"Even so," replied the countess. "They were designed for each other when they were children. The story is too long to tell now. If she had ever encouraged his passion, he would have hated her by this time; but her indifference—I believe I should be more correct if I said, her dislike of him has kept the flame alive, for

opposition always acts as a stimulus on the feelings of the earl of Vandeleur."

"He is a von perfide!"

The countess laughed.

"I will go back to Paris soon—immédiatement! I must be von imbécile to believe——"

"Any professions made by the earl of Vandeleur," said the countess, as the carriage stopped at the *porte cochère*. "But do not let his deceit deprive me of the pleasure of your company; for at Paris, and every where else, men are exactly the same—full of perfidy and deceit."

END OF VOL. III.

